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THE HEART OF THE STRUGGLE

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CONTENTS.

PAGE		PAGE	
EVENTS OF THE WEEK ...	241	LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ...	254
POLITICS AND AFFAIRS:—		POETRY:—	
The Heart of the Struggle	244	The Secret Garden. By	256
The Havoc of the Mind	245	Robert Nichols ...	256
Bolshevism in Retrospect	246		
THE PEACE PROPOSALS OF 1917 ...	247	THE WORLD OF BOOKS ...	258
A LONDON DIARY ...	249		
LIFE AND LETTERS:—		REVIEWS:—	
Of Sensible Forgiveness	250	Civilization ...	260
The Rent-Payer	252	The Middle Class ...	262
ART:—		Self-help and Smiles ...	264
Henri Gaudier-Brzeska	253	Plain and Coloured ...	264
		THE WEEK IN THE CITY ...	266

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Events of the Week.

THE great battle which began upon Monday week continues, and, although the rate of the German advance has slowed down considerably, it has not yet been brought to a halt. In general we are justified in regarding the struggle as approaching equilibrium. The world stands on tiptoe for the next great blow, writing off this one as spent. The conditions which give rise to this mood bear witness to the speed with which the first successes were achieved and developed. What may be called the "slogging" battle has no attraction for the German mind, and recent events, coming upon internal stress, have made this type of action more than ever uncongenial. We are impelled then to conclude that somewhere a fresh blow is pending, which will be pressed precisely so long as it seems to promise impressive results, and will then be allowed to lapse. The present shape of the front calls for watchful care; but the main avenues of approach to the capital are still closed.

* * *

IT is in the line of advance that the week has produced the most significant change. Until ten days ago the Germans had been advancing in an almost due southerly direction. The battle front then made a rough semi-circle upon the original line, and the point of the thrust passed through Pont d'Arcy and Fère-en-Tardenois from north to south. The alignment as we write resembles a triangle, and the apex points to the mouth of the Ourcq. The direction has been changed from due south to south-west. The original line of advance cut the Marne about Jaulgonne. But this point was reached on Friday week, and apart from the adventurous experiment of a German battalion, there has been no attempt to cross the river. We may distinguish the same tendency in the fate of the two original flanks of the attack. Last week the Germans were unable to debouch from Soissons, and could not make Reims their own. The Reims pivot is still almost unchanged; but about Soissons the situation is vastly different. The southern flank along the Marne seems to be accepted as a sufficient cover for the moment, and the centre of interest is transferred to the western flank between Noyon and Château-Thierry. The Crown Prince's troops have carried out a similar change to that

of von Kluck; but they have turned towards and not away from Paris.

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ON Thursday of last week Fère-en-Tardenois, an advanced base with considerable supplies, fell into German hands. It was a serious loss; but the Guard troops who took it after bitter fighting continued their advance without hesitation, and were on the Marne on the following day. It was early in the day that the enemy reached the northern bank of the river, and although the river bank could not be securely seized, there were detachments in touch with it from Château-Thierry to Dormans, a stretch of some ten miles. On the west, the Soissons-Château-Thierry road was held for the greater part of the day; but before nightfall the Germans had captured the crossings of the Ourcq and cross-roads at Oulchy le Château. Farther north the battle-front had been extended between Soissons and Noyon. The French troops fell back before the new onslaught, but at Blerancourt they stood and beat off repeated attacks throughout the day. Attempts were made to cross the Oise in the rear of the retiring troops, but the Germans were flung back with loss. All over the western face of the battlefield the Germans paid heavily for the small successes they secured. Almost every foot of advance was contested, and by vigorous counter-attacks the enemy was forced to win his victories many times over.

* * *

SOME five divisions seem to have been engaged in extending the battle-front north-west of Soissons, and the number of divisions engaged up to Saturday was computed at forty. Already the direction of thrust had turned definitely towards the west. For two days the enemy struggled to get across the plateau west of the Crise valley while other units were pressing westwards along the Ourcq. The Germans were engaged on the outskirts of Villers-Cotterets wood, but by pressing down the Ourcq were endeavoring to outflank it. West of the Crise a counter-attack threw the enemy back in disorder, and secured several hundreds of prisoners. Villages were lost and retaken and lost again. Farther south the Marne bank was lost between Château-Thierry and Verneuil; but this is the maximum extent to which the river bank has been captured. Away to the east a heavy attack, supported by tanks, drove the French out of Fort La Pompelle, south-east of Reims; but a brilliant counter-attack restored the battered fort and gave our Ally over 200 prisoners and four tanks. The defenders of the fort had the unusual spectacle of German tanks being smashed to pieces. They were tanks of a heavy type and badly manoeuvred, and they came under heavy artillery fire. Reims by this time was in a hopeless position; but the position was too valuable to abandon.

* * *

IT was on the last day of the first week of the new battle that Château-Thierry was taken. Between the Oise and the Marne the fighting raged throughout the day, and attack was succeeded by counter-attack at almost every position. Villages were never lost until they had been lost twice or thrice, and we have every reason to believe that these fierce little engagements were more costly to the Germans than to the Allies. The main

thrust had now narrowed down to between the Soissons-Paris road and the Marne. About the wood of Villers Cotters the struggle became intense. On Monday Faverolles, on the eastern outskirts, was retaken for the third or fourth time, and was retained against fierce and repeated attacks. American troops came into the battle to the south and gallantly held Neuilly Wood; and they were also engaged south of the Marne. By Wednesday the Germans had been four days battering against the positions south of the Soissons-Paris road with the greatest courage and resolution; but with losses out of all proportion to their success. They had marched away from the bulk of their guns. Their heavy guns were far behind, and the Allies made the most of their opportunities to exact the full price of the ground they gave.

THE western face of the battle-line had by now broken up into a number of tactical positions. One of these is the quadrilateral which lies between the Aisne and the Oise. The fighting in this quarter has been, from the first, more equal than on other sectors. The numerous attempts to cross the Oise have met with no success, and at present Compiègne is safe. In front of the Germans further south is a region of wooded country, and it is against this bulwark that the waves of the enemy have continued to dash themselves. Just as Compiègne is the objective in the struggle between the Oise and the Aisne, so is Villers Cotters on this wooded front below. A further focus of struggle is the neighborhood of the Ourcq. But the mere relation of these various points, where the fighting seems to foam and eddy, marks the vast difference between the struggle now and that apparently irresistible onrush in the opening days of the attack. In a week these giant attacks appear to stumble. In ten days their rhythm has sunk to that of positional warfare. But during this period we have lost much ground, a considerable quantity of material, and many men.

WHILE the enemy retains the initiative, we must suffer the disadvantage of holding reserves provisionally at good centres of communication near the places where it seems most likely they will be required. The one possible counter-balance is perfect reconnaissance. We still want many more aeroplanes. The German machines assisted the infantry in the first few days of the advance. We can only make this impossible by providing many more aeroplanes. We have learned much from the German tactics. But it is interesting to note that the German swerve from its original line of march may prove to have been as great a mistake as von Kluck's in the opposite direction. When the Germans turned west they were bound to march into the French reserves, whereas the chances of a breach in the line lay to the south. For the moment we are reassured. Indeed, our interest is not with the immediate foreground, but leaps forward towards the next attempt. The Germans have still between forty and fifty divisions of reserves for a new blow. We may expect it before long.

THE German submarines have at last appeared off the American coast, and have sunk in eight days about 16,000 tons of shipping. It is impossible not to see the similarity between this sea-attack and the land-attacks in France. Each comes, to some extent, as a surprise, and each depends for its success upon the absence of a sufficient number of opponents to cope with the situation. Finally, each, by enlarging the areas to be defended, aims at finding a weakness somewhere by which it may profit. But, fortunately, we are almost unthinkably stronger at sea than on land, and though there are unpleasant possibilities in the new German move, we may hope that its more serious effects will be minimized with the greatest promptitude. It seems incredible that the Germans should not have attempted to blockade the American coast before, and no adequate reason can be suggested for their forbearance. Ocean-going submarines can have a week or ten days off the American coasts without inconvenience, and if they are accompanied by one or more submarine feeders they may remain there indefinitely. At present we have not heard of any attempts to shell the many defenceless American towns. But the submarines may next appear

off Brazil, and begin shelling there. However, their real effect is no more than to disturb our naval dispositions. If the German submarines can appear in force off America one week and leave the English Channel free and then attack the Channel crossings another week, and so vary their places of attack continually, they are bound to make considerable calls upon our Navy.

* * *

A MOVE towards peace is again evident in Germany, promoted by the Jingo "Kreuz Zeitung," and backed more seriously by the Liberal "Frankfurter," which suggests, sensibly enough, that as England and Germany cannot destroy each other, they had better come to an accommodation. Much more resonant is the voice from Austria. The able and courageous "Arbeiter Zeitung" reports the proclamation of a Socialist Congress, warning the Government that the workmen, who are in a state of great excitement, will oppose a policy of Imperialism, condemning the treaties of Brest and Bucharest, and demanding a peace offer based on the League of Nations, disarmament, arbitration, and the renunciation of annexations and indemnities. This is a summons to a peace such as we are bound to accept, when it is offered to us. Meanwhile, M. Clemenceau has made an eloquent and gravely worded appeal to the patriotic spirit of France. "Cruel hours" were coming; the reserves of all the combatants were being put in and exhausted. The Government would never yield; but the deciding hand in the game would be played by America. The Socialists declined to vote confidence in the Prime Minister; but his majority was substantial.

* * *

IT is bad news that the Russian Government has agreed to negotiate with Finland for the cession of part of the Murman coast. The proposal, as we understand it, does not affect the new ice-free port of Alexandrovsk, nor its railway connection with Petrograd. It is that the northern frontier of Finland should be extended to the Murman coast, west of the railway and the port. Russia will thus retain her one free exit. In normal times of peace there might be no objection to the acquisition by Finland of a northern line of communication. Under present circumstances, however, a Finnish port in the Arctic would be a German port, and might soon become a submarine base. Some time must pass, of course, before a railway could be built or a new port constructed, but everything goes to suggest that Finland has placed itself permanently within the German system. The Bolsheviks have doubtless given their assent in principle (no treaty is yet concluded) simply because they lack the military force to resist, and by way of compensation they are to receive a rectification of their southern frontier with Finland, which may diminish the danger to Petrograd. The bargain is indisputably a menace, though a somewhat distant one, to our naval security. While our informal occupation of Alexandrovsk continues, it ought to be easy to deal with any immediate local risks.

* * *

THERE are signs of what looks like a concerted Press "offensive" this week in favor of Japanese intervention in Russia. It has broken out simultaneously in the "Times," "Daily Chronicle," and "New York Times." The tone is less angry and contemptuous to Russia than on previous occasions. On the other hand, there is less attempt to disguise the political character of the intervention. The proposal, as the "Times" states it, is that the Japanese, possibly accompanied by Allied troops, should march through Siberia westwards as rapidly as possible, organizing the country, and even holding elections as they proceed. A counter-revolutionary army, it is argued, will gradually rally to them, and they will construct a counter-revolutionary administration with some show of popular assent as they move. Save for this pseudo-democratic camouflage, the plan does not differ from earlier plans, and is open to all the old objections. It ignores distance. Even if it met with little opposition, a Japanese army must take two or three years to walk from Vladivostok to Moscow. Long before it got there the Germans would meet it halfway. The idea of conducting elections under the protection of a Japanese army would rouse amusement if our national

sense of humor were not dissipated by war. In spite of this influential backing in the Press, we cling to the hope that the inspiration of these articles was unofficial. A Reuter telegram from Washington states that America and the Allies have come to an agreement to refrain from political intervention in Russia, while giving liberal economic aid to the Republic. That is the only sane policy.

* * *

THERE is one more proof, if further proof were needed, that natural affinity and prudential calculations will always drive the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia into the arms of the Germans. The Germans are on the spot as the Japanese are not, and moreover your "truly-Russian" Orthodox propertied class would rather deal with a race whose ways it understands than with invaders from the Far East. General Krasnov, who fought as Kerensky's commander in the last stand outside Petrograd, seems to have taken over the command of the remaining forces of the Don and Kuban Cossacks, after the elimination of Kornilov, Kaledin, and Alexeieff. He has now proclaimed himself Hetman and Dictator, much as General Skoropadsky did in the Ukraine, and claims to speak for a vast federated area stretching from the elastic confines of the Ukraine through the Caucasus to the Caspian Sea. How far this counter-revolutionary government has any real or assured existence we do not know. It has been invariably worsted in fighting with the Bolsheviks, and the poorer Cossacks have deserted its standards. That, of course, is why it has called the enemy in. Krasnov has in two proclamations defined his position. In one he sets up again all the laws of the Russian Empire as they existed before the first revolution. In the second he announces that Austria has entered the Don region "to act in alliance with us" against the Red Guards and to re-establish order.

* * *

AFTER what has happened in Finland, in the Ukraine and now in the Don region, it is unpardonable to miss the clear meaning of Russian events. The real division in Russia is between the party of property, which is now frankly Monarchist once more, and is concerned mainly to recover the land, and, on the other side, the Bolsheviks. We do not dispute that there may be large numbers of Moderate Socialists and Liberals, who are still pro-Ally and anti-German. These, however, are the intellectuals. The men of action and the men of the world are fighting, not for ideas, but for much simpler stakes, and they will infallibly rally to the Germans, for the simple reason that the Germans alone have forces on the spot. We cannot compete with that advantage. Even from the most realistic standpoint it is clear that the rôle indicated for us, were it only by considerations drawn from the balance of power, is to support the Bolsheviks, who alone have everything to lose from a further German intervention. The German tactics clearly are to restore the Russian autocracy, using the Monarchist, counter-revolutionary Ukraine and Don as bases for intervention. The *émigré* from Russia is as bad a councillor as was the *émigré* from France, who led our forefathers into uniformly disastrous adventures. The extravagances of the Bolshevik régime are not necessarily permanent, and the best way to prepare a happier future for Russia is to give her some sense of security against the peril of starvation and the peril of invasion. She needs primarily railway stock and tools to restart her normal life again. These things we can provide, but no foreigner can do her political thinking for her.

* * *

This Government appears to have forgotten that it has taken powers to set up conscription in Ireland. Lord French has issued a persuasive proclamation, which might have made a powerful appeal two or three years ago. It asks only for the modest total of 50,000 volunteer recruits by October 1st, to replenish the Irish divisions, and thereafter for from 2,000 to 3,000 recruits monthly. The limit of age is from eighteen to twenty-seven, and the appeal is addressed not to the agricultural population, but to the young men of the towns, especially those engaged in retail trade. Then follows the inducement:—

"Men who come forward to fight for their Motherland are entitled to share in all their Motherland can

offer. Steps have therefore been taken to ensure as far as possible that land shall be available for men who have fought for their country."

Such a promise will probably strike Irishmen as a remarkable proof of the soundness of rebellious tactics. Whether it will move them until Home Rule is a fact and the threat of Conscription formally withdrawn remains to be seen. Mr. George is recurring to his own instinctive tactics of barter. But why did he spoil them by threats? He forgets, moreover, that it is precisely the young men of the towns who are the strength of Sinn Fein, while it is the laborers on the land who want to possess it.

* * *

We hope that this handsome offer to Irishmen will be duly noted by the English workers. They have given freely all they had to give, but they are not told that they are "ENTITLED TO SHARE IN ALL THAT THEIR MOTHERLAND CAN OFFER." There has been no promise of free land in England after the war, either to young men engaged in "retail trade," or to the agricultural laborer. The "competent military authority" beckoned, and they—went. Virtue, as usual, is its own reward. On the other hand, there has been introduced this week a Bill which aims at subjecting all emigration to the colonies and all propaganda for emigration to official control. This is a mischievous measure, for it would suppress free discussion of the labor conditions in the various colonies, but it is specially interesting as an indication of the working of this Government's mind. It evidently means to promote emigration after the war. The Irishman is offered land at home. The English worker, if he wants to better his lot, must go abroad. We hope the Labor Party and the Agricultural Laborer's Union will study Lord French's proclamation. It is enough to rouse even the English farm-laborer from his habitual docility and inertia. "A SHARE IN ALL THAT YOUR MOTHERLAND CAN OFFER" has an odd ring in a Dublin Castle proclamation. These are epoch-making words.

* * *

THE "Honor" Lists accumulate. Monday's papers published the first modest instalment (extending to many columns) of birthday honors, promising many more to come. They include the usual crowd of peers, baronets, and knights, fairly distinguished, undistinguished, and badly distinguished. What is the theory of these honors? They are rewards for patriotic service. The country, then, is not served for naught; the blood of its children may be so poured out; but hundreds and thousands of civilians have found in the most terrible war ever fought the means to gratify their pride of place, or of distinction from their fellows. We observe that the leader of the Labor Party receives a Privy Councillorship within a few months of his appointment. Do Mr. Adamson's constituents approve his acceptance of this honor? If so, of what is Labor "independent?" Not of the Government. And if it is dependent on the Government for honors and places of profit lavished upon its leaders, what is its precise value to Labor? Just nothing, it would seem, when such a question as the education of the children of the workers is at stake.

* * *

THE Minister of Education has made a weak surrender of the only part of the Education Bill which marked a definite, though a very partial, advance. He has yielded to Lancashire more than Lancashire asked him to give. Lancashire capital, and we are afraid we must add Lancashire labor, proposed an alternative to the proposal of the Bill. This was to give 320 hours a year to work in continuation schools from fourteen years to eighteen. Lancashire suggested either half-time education (600 hours a year) up to sixteen or part-time instruction (320 hours) up to eighteen. In his rage for concession, Mr. Fisher outdid the Lancastrians. For seven years the new continuation system is to stop at sixteen. Even during this probationary period the local education authority is to be allowed to cut down the toll of hours from 320 to 280. Lancashire will, of course, take full advantage of this permission to contract itself out of the national system. The House, including (need we say?) the Labor Party, made no serious fight against this capitulation.

Politics and Affairs.

THE HEART OF THE STRUGGLE.

THE Battle of the Aisne has rapidly become the Battle of the Ourcq without providing any fresh surprise or consolation. We can trace the line of the battle-front on the map or appraise its significance in the mind without approaching appreciably nearer the heart of the struggle. We cannot remain insensible to the attainment of a certain unstable equilibrium, however anxious we are. And however optimistic we may be, we cannot refuse to admit that the gist of the matter is at once grave and problematical. The popular tendency is to view the war topographically; and no one can witness unmoved the overrunning of quiet towns and great cities in which the hearts of many of our Allies still throb. The scientific mood is to stand by the theories which have obtained a firm currency in other struggles against insurgent claims to undue power. But the root of the matter is a subtler thing, and we do well to steel ourselves against the suggestions of the obvious and the scientific. Not only the importance of towns, but even the relevance of many theories has passed away, and if we would view the battle aright, we must realize that it is a fundamental difference of spirit that is at issue.

We cannot ignore the fact that there has recently been a strange falling back upon the part of the Germans on the spirit of the opening of the war. Writers have been sensible of a touch of the dramatic in penning the headline, "The Crown Prince turns to Paris." But the world at large, like the soldier, is weary of such shibboleths, and it is through the curtain of these illusions that we seek the truth. Some have sought to find it in our past misdemeanors. We have not had unity of command. But it should hardly require to be stated that where five nations and a conglomerate of races are facing one nation and practically one race, unity of command, *i.e.*, the recognition of one Commander-in-Chief, cannot be the whole of the business or even the deciding factor. Where you have five bodies of men trained on a wholly different tradition, using weapons requiring different fuel, moved by different motives, it is trivial to suggest that to put them under one commander will make them one in the same sense that an army like the German is one. They are not necessarily inferior; equal they can hardly be. Nor can we find any sure solace in the suggestion that we are not yet sufficiently scientific, and that when we have learned to interpret the records of our airmen aright, we shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. If men cannot fly, as they cannot on certain days, such as those which preceded the last German attack, it is a solecism to speak of the interpretation of their records. There were no records, and why trouble about them? The enemy has perfected the factor which everyone knew to be of critical importance, and which he prided himself he had attained at the beginning of the war. He has always known that mobility multiplies the available men, and he has spent much time over discovering how to achieve it. Furthermore, he does not rate the individual life as highly as the Allies. He is prepared to sacrifice men in the process of achieving that wreck of the German people which will remain, and consequently he achieves more in the same space of time than we do.

These considerations involve some disturbing consequences, and if we read the strategy of Foch aright, they are almost inevitable. In the midst of this terrible clash of arms and the swift marches of trained soldiers to some barely-imagined goal, we can see the watchful eyes of the

two commanders. We are told that this time it is a "politico-military effect" that is sought, and it is obvious that there is much less of the flag-waving, drum-beating clamor about the new offensive. We do not hear any more of the supreme direction of "his Majesty the Kaiser," and the Crown Prince has only been a sort of side-dish. The fact is we have worn through the tinsel and have reached nearer to the heart of things. The crisis is too serious for both sides; and no soldier, not even a German, underrates the force he encounters nor the direction under which it is moved. Captain Persius informs his readers that we have never been beaten. But the Germans having declared that almost everything, in turn, will bring victory, have fallen back upon the French. "Beat the French and all is over" is the word to-day, just as "the submarines are coming" was the thing last year. But this is all meant to keep the people quiet. Underneath it and behind each of these terrible blows, in which so many men, with their little round of human interests, are battered into fragments, are the two protagonists, each seeking the answer to the question, "What is the other doing?" Ludendorff, a man with a much more youthful and ruthless spirit than Hindenburg, is seeking to encompass that disintegration which befel the Prussian army at Jena and after, and which it inflicted upon the French fifty years ago. It may be impossible of achievement to-day. He undoubtedly does not think so; and Calais, Amiens, Paris are but milestones on his way. Foch, whose reputation was world-wide before the war, is a subtler mind, and his policy at the moment is perforce to take risks; but his end is much the same. Where Ludendorff will throw in as many men as his organization will permit, Foch uses as few as he can possibly put in to ward off a vital blow. In such a contest it would be strange if the Allies did not suffer many turns of fortune which they would have preferred to avoid. We have to realize that the men are more than the places, that even the loss of material is of little importance—provided the loss can be made good—if the balance of reserves remains with us. The gist of the situation is the question of final initiative; and if Foch can end the present stress with a balance of total force on his side, he can take the offensive with good heart.

In this we are assuming that we must drive the Germans back. No military student has said how far we must drive them, and we must remind ourselves that the world is still ours whatever should happen on the field of battle. The trend of civilization has carried the centre of gravity of Europe far beyond its shores. The heart of industrial States is in America or Africa (or both); it is no longer in Europe, and the Germans are fighting a battle already lost. It was lost, indeed, in that vague era which men label as the time of the "Industrial Revolution," and so far as one can see nothing can redeem it. The past week has carried the Germans to the Marne and has pushed their front down the Ourcq. The enemy is facing towards Paris, and many Germans are rebuilding their dreams of a triumphal march through the capital of France. But the capital of the Allies is no longer at Paris any more than it was in September, 1914. The mood of the moment is one of expectation. We have tasted the full bitterness of past vicissitudes. There are probably more to come. The next sector to move may be that between Montdidier and Soissons. This, too, looks towards Paris, and unless it is opened we cannot see how the capital is to be won.

But we must realize that all the glamor and glitter and tinsel of war have been worn threadbare. It is not Paris or Chalons, or Verdun or Amiens, or Calais that constitutes the real objective. Even if we did not, as the

Germans admit, hold their future in our hands; even if we did not stand, as we do, upon the threshold of their domestic larders; even if we did not inhibit, as despite all boast we continue to do, the resumption of work by their factories, the true objective in the resistance we maintain to the spirit of German militarism. We may symbolize our faith in Amiens or Paris; but the heart of the best mankind is set on a more spiritual goal which it will not fail to reach. Foch's strategy does undoubtedly make great calls on our endurance. There are at least even chances that it is the sounder, as it certainly seems the subtler; and by yielding to our misgivings we do but weaken it. We must realize that at the end of nearly a fortnight the great pivots of Soissons and Reims are but little impaired. No one can read the German press without being convinced of the greatness of the enemy's losses. We have suffered much, but we have sustained much, and the curtain has not risen upon the last act.

THE HAVOC OF THE MIND.

THE havoc wrought by war upon the human mind becomes continually more evident. The process is inherent in a force which subverts the ordinary values and substitutes destruction for production as the central object of man's activity. This sudden defiance of the social standards and purposes which had been slowly moulding a reasonable intelligence in the ordering of human affairs is bound to derange the general mind. Not merely does the inherent unreason of war, adopted as a mode of settling human difficulties, stagger humanity; as its processes unfold themselves, its contradiction of intelligible practices in all departments of life gradually saps the supports of reason. With increasing security and education an ever-growing body of the people had been getting some rational order into an enlarging area of experience. They had ever been laying their plans of life further ahead and with increasing confidence. The play of accident was reduced; the possibilities of "insurance" were extending. War is the dramatic reversal of all this reasonability. It shortens the focus of vision and revokes the canons of causation as surely as it removes the prohibition from "Thou shalt not kill."

At first this havoc was modified by the intrusion of new emotions, appeals to finer feelings of sympathy and sacrifice. The early war, divorced from self-seeking aims, was a voluntary war. There was much eager risk-taking for a great cause. There was the willingness of sedentary men to undergo the rigors of military discipline, or to adjust their business or profession to the emergency, with its watchword "carry on." Indeed, if organization were synonymous with reason, it was possible to contend that the experience through which we have been passing had made our social order more rational than before, by stamping upon it a single social purpose, emanating from a central control.

But here we come to grips with our problem. Can any serious observer pretend that our governing processes, with all their intricacies and all their rigors, do actually impress the general mind with their reasonability? We know that the reverse is true, that the follies and corruptions of the war-order are everywhere stirring indignation and derision in all circles of society. There is not a group of business men whose conversation is not filled with the latest splashes from the fountain of bureaucratic folly. So far from impressing an idea of reasonable order, the ways of government in every field of conduct have been riddled with vacillation and inconsistency. Recruiting scandals, war contracts, food controls, shipping economy, foreign purchases, war-borrowing, the treatment of conscientious objectors and of Ireland, the censorship and all the vagaries of Dora, together have made up a liberal education in unreason. There has been little continuity, little common con-

sistent purpose, little effective correlation of the several needs and resources of the community in its grave emergency! Perhaps these qualities were not to be expected, for all civil activities have been subject to the devitalising back stroke of the war itself. For the spectacle of the war, distorted in the falsifying mirror of the press, has been a kaleidoscope of unrelated scenes of horror and endurance. To a few informed and discerning minds there may appear signs of an intelligible order. But for the general mind it must be mainly a shifting blur of sensational and miraculous events. The fascination of this mysterious show has gradually undermined the rules of reason, and left it a prey to the passions of hate, fear, suspicion, and the instinct of herding together for security. From a life of safe routine we have all been plunged, emotionally and intellectually, into an atmosphere of sudden and incalculable risks and chances. And it has unhinged men's minds.

Our spiritual pastors and masters have failed us in our time of need. From our statesmen, our Churches, our Universities, our Press, has come little help to sustain sanity of thought and feeling against the impact of the destroyer. For, as the principle of destruction has extended its area of havoc, the normal types of personal influence have been reversed. In the atmosphere of war-politics, some economy of selection brings to the top a type of gambler who can play most adroitly each fresh hand dealt out to him by the fortunes of the fray. Outside of politics in other fields of influence the same temper prevails. Quick-change artists in ideas and sentiments, in facts and words, journalistic seers and prophets, ply the public with fresh incitements and bewilderments. When the tedium of their impotence begins to pall upon the people, and the qualities of common sense, fair play, and scepticism show signs of reasserting themselves, the gamblers in high place, fearing lest the peoples may come to their senses, dole out through their Press fresh stores of incitement. Thus anything deserving the name of "public opinion" has been kept from coming into being. War demands as a safe condition of its duration a mind in which the power alike of personal judgment and of the general will has been inhibited. Take the example of the hour. A fuddled indictment of our public men is dragged into a law case, turned for the moment into an entertainment of Colney Hatch. The enemy is credited with a supernatural knowledge of these people's abnormal weaknesses and vices. There is not a scrap of evidence that such knowledge or such vices exist. The supposed German "list" includes some of the most honored names in England. If such a people, under such leaders, had ever existed, the war could not have been maintained for a month. Nevertheless rounds of applause greet the chief accuser and acclaim his acquittal, and he becomes the interpreter of the popular discontent and unbelief. While the "Times" suggests that he should be more cautious about his next indictment, and that if our leading classes cannot be good they might at least be careful, a part of the nation—let us hope a small one—befouls itself without cause, and in face of the world. A sufficiently strong appeal to fear or hate is hard to resist, for it demands no evidence (it has no time or taste for such irrelevancies), and the character or record of those who feed it matter nothing. A Carson, a Northcliffe, a Bottomley, a Tupper, or a Billing—it is all one to the mob-mind. This war-mind has taken four years of training on German spies, concrete emplacements, Donington Hall, Bolo hunts, pacifist conspiracies, camerillas, and Berlin "Black Books," to get it to its present maturity. Indeed, it may be argued that the one great success in the governmental conduct of the war has been the production of this submissive and credulous disposition.

But there are dangers in such a situation. The inquirer may be hoist with his own petard. His hounds may turn to devour Actæon. This was the lesson of the French and many another Revolution. For the appeal is to an absolute credulity which, once shaken, may change suddenly (as in the Billing case) into insane suspicion, and smash its idols. And this peril is the graver when

the safety-valve of free speech and a free press is absent. Here is a Government conducting the vital affairs of the nation in its most critical emergency without any real contact with the mind of the people, either directly or through their representatives. Parliament exerts no real function; it knows it is not representative, and the popular forces which ought to be behind it are utterly unknown and impenetrable. The Press usurps a public opinion for which it has no warrant. The people, as a collective voice and will, is dumb. This has seemed a satisfactory state of loyalty to those who want to manage high affairs without anybody meddling. But it only remains safe and satisfactory so long as the great confidence trick remains undetected.

How if the public mind begins to recover from the drugging and doping process and innumerable points of private judgment begin here and there and everywhere to grow into little foci of local opinion, gathering continual strength until they make an overwhelming force of sceptical thought? There are signs of such a change. The incentives with which the Governments feed the Press and the Press stokes the flames of public passion, are failing of their effect. The politician's language about "peace-traps" is losing hold upon large sections of the people. Not only the soldiers but the peoples want peace—not a peace of panic, but a peace which carries honor and security and a prospect of future life for the world—as soon as possible. We believe this to be the deep desire of all conditions of men in this and other countries. But this accumulation of private passionate desire does not yet constitute a public opinion. Indeed, the mind of ordinary men and women is not itself a stable and consistent unity. Those who in quiet private converse express the gravest mistrust of their rulers and a craving for a good and reasonable settlement, will often still give an automatic response to the old cries. What is taking place is a slow struggle back towards the sanity of individual judgment, an effort to throw off the passions and superstitions of the herd. Everywhere springs up resentment at discovering that Britons are not only losing the power of self-determination, but are not allowed to know what is determined for them by their masters. But this public opinion cannot thrive and grow strong without recognized and trusted leaders, who shall give it voice and fashion it into a national policy. To re-establish the British constitution on a parliamentary basis, with a restoration of the right to form and express public opinion upon full and reliable information, should be the first demand of these leaders. The second should be the establishment and maintenance of free contacts, not merely between our Government and people but between the peoples who are everywhere the victims of war. That contact the proposal of a Stockholm Conference would have established. It was turned down by the Governments, who, as it is now known, were at the same time conducting, through their agents, a long series of secret *pourparlers*, all doomed to failure. Now again it is in simple truth the turn of the peoples. Their Governments fail them, the societies these men construct are failing too. Now it is the hour for a true public spirit.

BOLSHEVISM IN RETROSPECT.

THE Bolsheviks have already enjoyed a longer lease of power than their two revolutionary predecessors taken together, and in what remains of Russia their authority has been less contested. It ought by now to be possible to form a judgment on their system, but the task is still inordinately difficult. In the first place, one must combat the disposition to judge them solely by the reaction of their revolution on our own fortunes. None of us can forget that it is the direct result of their action that the Germans are once more upon the Marne, and few remember the mitigating circumstances. We do not believe that Russia under any rulers could have continued after 1917 to play an active part in the war. The Army had melted away before November, and the exhaustion of her food supplies and the breakdown of

the railways prohibited any prompt recovery. Those who contrast the pitiful plight of Russia to-day with the inflated prestige which she enjoyed in 1914 allow themselves to be deceived by a myth. We agree with Dr. Dillon in ranking the prevalent view of the strength of autocratic Russia among the most amazing delusions of history. Russia never was strong, and her weakness is written all over the early history of the war. The high command was infested with treachery and corruption: the infantry fought without rifles: the artillery was short of guns; the guns had little ammunition; and the feeble industry in the rear could not make good the defect. Bankruptcy was staved off only by the solicitude of the Allies, and the political imbecility of the Government frustrated the patriotic impulse of the people to organize for defence. The one resource which Russia did possess was man-power, and this she squandered. Because men were plentiful and public opinion powerless, it was possible to send men into battle armed with sticks, but long before March, 1917, the Russian Army as a whole was broken. Wholesale desertion had begun before the Revolution, and after the death-roll had passed five, or, as some say, seven millions, the limit of endurance was in sight. Discipline (in spite of a certain Russian fraternity in all ranks) had been far harsher than it is even in the German Army. No Revolutionary Government could have maintained that system and any sudden change was bound to be ruinous. Kerensky hoped to fire the country and the army with the spirit of a democratic war of liberation. That might have been even in the best conditions a vain hope: it was too late for such a change of front. The Allies, in any event, gave him no chance. One cannot make a democratic war on Secret Treaties. It was this appalling heritage which the Bolsheviks took over. One must say frankly that in the end they made bad worse, but at least their failure was more interesting, and their effort more inspiring while it lasted, than that of any of their predecessors. Trotsky's duel at Brest did at least produce the Austrian and German peace-strikes, and his appeal to principle, though it did not save Russia from the Junkers, availed to make thinking men in Germany heartily ashamed of the "German" peace in the East. It may one day bear unexpected fruit. The hard facts none the less remain. The Germans are on the Marne, and they are also on the Don.

In the long run the domestic policy of the Bolsheviks may be of more moment even to the world beyond Russia than their rash and unconventional diplomacy. Here is the first attempt in European history (for the Paris Commune was only a momentary episode) to realize Socialism without compromises and on a vast scale. Our curiosity on the subject is unlimited, but none of the correspondents attempt to satisfy it. The general picture, as they all point out, is one of chaos and misery. We know that the towns still go in constant danger of literal starvation, and on the whole we suppose it is still true that industry is almost at a standstill. How far this is due, however, to external facts—that the granary of the Ukraine and the coal mines of the Don are closed—we do not know. Does the communist system anywhere begin to work well or even tolerably? Is any part of the unquestioned energy of the Bolsheviks turned to the solution of the vital problem of transport? Are the peasants cultivating the land which they have suddenly acquired? Where materials are to be had, can the workers' committees run the factories? Allowing for all the unfavorable conditions of the experiment, does it, after seven months, show any signs of permanence and vitality? Is crime decreasing? Are the schools well attended? Granted that the middle-classes are still hostile, do the poorer workers still regard the hazardous experiment with hope, and is there a prospect that they at least may draw some gain from it? These are the questions which we want to ask, but there is none to answer. Everything that we can find in the Press is written either from the Allied or from the Russian Cadet standpoint. From the former the Bolsheviks are simply traitors to the Allied cause, from the latter they are incendiaries who have ruined the comfortable Russian propertied class. Of course the experiment works ill for the 10 or 15 per cent. who

formed that class, but how does it promise for the remaining 90 per cent.?

We find no answer to these questions in the pamphlet which Mr. Maxim Litvinoff has just written ("The Bolshevik Revolution: Its Rise and Meaning") for the British Socialist Party. He gives a clear narrative of the history of the revolution, and some defence of its tactics, but no one outside Russia could answer our concrete questions. On the whole, we incline to think that this defence of Bolshevik tactics exaggerates the differences which divide them from other Russian Socialist parties. They all agreed in proposing to abolish private property in land, and to expropriate the land-owners without compensation. The Bolsheviks indeed actually took over the text of Tchernoff's Land Bill. This alone made a class-war, and this chiefly explained the plots of Korniloff and the opposition of the Cadets to the Kerensky régime. Kerensky and Tchernoff, if they meant to carry that Bill, could not have continued to collaborate with the Anti-Socialist parties. The Constituent Assembly contained the merest dilution of non-Socialist members, and must at once have set up an all-Socialist Government to enforce a Socialist agrarian policy. The Bolsheviks, to be sure, would do nothing to temper the wind to the shorn backs of the propertied class, and they challenged the world by repudiating the foreign debt. None the less, we imagine that any Socialist Government must necessarily have made almost as sharp a cleavage in Russian society as the Bolsheviks made in fact. Russians live for ideas, and to their minds microscopic differences in tactics assume dimensions which astonish us. The Bolsheviks have done their deed in a ruthless and violent way, and the more opposition they aroused, whether among Liberals or among Moderate Socialists, the better pleased they were; but let us not forget that any Russian Socialist party must have done the same deed. To socialize land in Russia is nine-tenths of any possible revolution. It is only the remaining tenth part which divides the Moderates from the Extremists.

The real rift in theory and practice between the Bolsheviks and all other Socialists turns on their destruction of the Constituent Assembly, and their erection of the Soviet system into a permanent and sovereign institution. It would be pedantic to condemn their violent revolution sharply; few revolutions are ever completed in a single application of force, and Kerensky's Government was a stop-gap, with no regular democratic foundation. On the other hand, the dissolution of an Assembly freshly elected by universal suffrage, to most democrats and even to most Socialists, does stamp the Bolshevik régime as one of excessive violence. There may have been mitigating circumstances, for the elections to the Assembly were made amid confusions and misunderstandings which may well have vitiated the popular choice, but that argument does not impress us, for it was precisely the Bolshevik *coup d'état* on the eve of the elections which introduced these confusions. They kicked over the ballot-box, and then pleaded that the votes could not be counted. Their case is a bad one, because opposition to the Constituent Assembly was no part of their original position, and they called for its early meeting more loudly than any other party. Their present theoretical contention that the Soviet is a purer form of popular sovereignty was elaborated only when experience showed that they could not win a majority in the Assembly, but could contrive to dominate the Soviets. It was, in short, accident, interest, and tactics which led them to erect the Soviet into a permanent governing body.

Wherein does the difference lie between the two systems? The Assembly rested, of course, upon the traditional basis of territorial representation, which democracies took over from the feudal past. In spite of the adoption and survival of this basis the world over, one ought not to make a fetish of it, or to refuse to examine other possible systems. If one could start *de novo*, and ask what is the natural method of grouping citizens together for purposes of representation, the territorial system might not have the best of the argument. In what sense are all the men and women,

masters and servants, employers, shopkeepers, clerks, civil servants, manual workers, and "idle rich," who live, say, in Westminster, a natural social unit, merely because they inhabit the same area? Miners and non-miners do not amalgamate easily in colliery areas, nor agricultural laborers and suburban residents in a Home County. The root idea of the Soviet system is that those who work together are the natural unit. All the hands in a given factory meet together to choose a delegate. All the peasants in a village do the same, and all the soldiers in a battalion. The unit of representation is, in short, a natural and familiar social organism. Men vote together who habitually associate together. The delegates chosen in this way by each group of workers form a local council (urban or rural), and these councils in their turn send delegates to the National Soviet, which in its turn elects a Standing Executive.

As a question of theory it would be well to keep an open mind about this system. The territorial system is firmly rooted in Western traditions, but let us beware of assuming that Russia, with no liberal past, ought to copy our models. The Soviet system has some obvious merits of its own, and it may happen to be well adapted to Russian conditions. The idea is interesting, but manifestly everything turns on the working out. We cannot discover that the system has been reduced to any regular form. The answers of Russians to our inquiries give us the impression that the system grew almost spontaneously, and that no one had troubled to draw up electoral lists, or to work out an accurate numerical basis of representation, or a system of voting with any reasonable precautions against fraud or violence. Nor can we discover that brainworkers—*e.g.*, doctors or teachers, have any chance of representation, though they may be elected. Women, enfranchised for the Assembly, would usually be outside the Soviet system. The entire middle-class, excepting only the higher employees in factories, were deliberately left outside it. It is this feature of the Soviet system which we find repugnant to our notions of democracy. It may be no great privilege for an ex-landlord, a cashiered officer, an unemployed lawyer, and a ruined grocer to vote in the impotent minority while revolution runs at high tide. But to deny them citizen rights, to treat them as outlaws who have no right or voice in the conduct of society, is to offend at once against humanity and policy and democracy. Let the majority rule, even when it is composed mainly of the manual workers, but "the dictatorship of the proletariat" becomes tyranny when it abolishes the minority, and relies for power not on its own spontaneous cohesion, but on the exclusion of every probable element of opposition. This is not democracy, nor yet is it any necessary part of Socialism. The German Socialists, notably of Kautsky's school, are, we imagine, the purest Marxists, and they deny emphatically that it follows from Marxist teaching. The Soviet idea has its attractions, and we imagine that it might be so amended as to give a fair representative voice to sections of the population who are neither factory-workers, nor peasants, nor soldiers. We hope it is true that the "intellectuals" are now beginning to rally to the existing government, which obviously is too strong to be upset by any rival Russian party. It began by emphasizing its own extremest tendencies. Its subsequent development has been in the direction of relative moderation and tolerance. Its ruthless assertion of the class war may be modified as it begins to feel itself secure. The future in any event must be left to the Russians themselves. A forcible Allied intervention would be the signal for the march of the Germans on Moscow.

THE PEACE PROPOSALS OF 1917.

In the *Action* of May 22nd, M. Maurice de Waleffe, who spoke of me in terms which modesty forbids me to quote, expressed the hope that the "painful" but, in his view, necessary measure taken against me by the French Government would not impair my recollection of France.

A tribute from a political opponent personally unknown to me is particularly grateful, and I can assure M. de Waleffe that his hope is justified. Not until I was forcibly ejected from the country which has been my home for nearly twelve years did I fully realize how deeply rooted my attachment to France had become. I know now that I shall never really feel at home elsewhere; when once one has *Paris dans le sang*, one has a mistress for life.

It is a matter of satisfaction to me that the accuracy of the information which it was my good fortune to give to the public has not been seriously disputed. There are forty-four members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber who know I told the truth, not to mention several hundreds of other people to whom has been confided what the "Presse" called the "secret de polichinelle." So in its "semi-official" explanation to the British Government, repeated by Lord Robert Cecil to the House of Commons on May 30th, the French Government attributed my expulsion not to inaccuracy, but to my conduct in publishing what passed at a confidential committee; Lord Robert Cecil, moreover, threw the whole responsibility for the expulsion on the French Government, and his reply plainly indicated that the British Government had not been consulted. Mr. Balfour, in his speech on May 16th, did not contest a single one of my statements. Yet, as the "Temps" remarked, he might have appealed to the testimony of Mr. Lloyd George, who knew exactly what had happened.

The facts, thus uncontested, prove the keen desire of the Central Empires to make peace last year—a desire due to the realism of their rulers, who evidently have been convinced for three years that the game was not worth the candle, and that even if victory could be obtained its price would be too high. The rulers of the Central Empires began long ago to count the cost, as kings and governments at war have usually done in the past; on the side of the Allies it has been regarded almost as treasonable to count the cost: hence the difference between the two policies. Anatole France said long ago, in "Les Opinions de Jérôme Cogniard," that a war for ideals might be worse than a war for material objects. The present war has justified him: when one is fighting to establish the millennium, it is difficult to stop. I have not said and do not say that peace was possible last year: I do not know. What has been established is that peace, far from being remote and quite unattainable, was almost within our grasp several times. The error of our rulers, or most of them, consists, not in having refused peace when it could have been had on reasonable terms, but in having refused to inquire seriously whether it could be had on reasonable terms.

Of the four peace proposals known to us last year—there may have been others—three came from Austria.

(1) On March 31st Prince Sixte de Bourbon communicated to M. Poincaré the first letter from the Emperor Charles, who recognized the justice of the French claim in regard to Alsace-Lorraine. M. Poincaré gave his word of honor to show the letter to nobody but M. Ribot, but it was understood that it would be communicated also to the King and Mr. Lloyd George, and it was so communicated, Prince Sixte paying two visits to England. M. Poincaré, in the course of his conversation with the Prince, claimed for France the frontiers of 1814 and 1790; reparations, restitutions, and indemnities and guarantees on the left bank of the Rhine. Mr. Lloyd George was favorable to negotiations on the basis of the Emperor's letter; M. Poincaré was not. Prince Sixte, after his visits to England, returned to Switzerland, and the result of his report was a second letter from the Emperor Charles, who expressed his pleasure that England and France were in substantial agreement with him, repeated his conviction that he would be able to persuade Germany to agree to reasonable peace terms, but said that the demands of France must be limited to Alsace-Lorraine in order that agreement might be possible. On April 19th M. Ribot and Mr. Lloyd George met Baron Sonnino at St. Jean-de-Maurienne, and, although they did not show him the Emperor Charles's letter or inform him of its existence,

he was informed of the fact that proposals had been made and of their nature. Baron Sonnino was not at all disposed to treat, but nevertheless the *pourparlers* continued for a considerable time, being only definitely abandoned about July. There is no reason to suppose that M. Ribot insisted on the demands made by M. Poincaré; Italy was the obstacle to a settlement. In order to meet the Italian claims, M. Poincaré proposed that Austria should take Silesia in return for Trieste and the Trentino, but the Emperor Charles did not regard the suggestion as a practical one. None of the other Allies was consulted about the matter, and it has never been explained why they could not have been treated in the same way as Baron Sonnino without any breach of confidence. Moreover, in July the Emperor Charles's letter was shown to Baron Sonnino in spite of M. Poincaré's undertaking. M. Ribot also seems to have shown it to M. Albert Thomas, after the return of the latter from Russia. It is very difficult to form an opinion as to whether the German Emperor was cognisant of the Emperor Charles's overtures; if he was, it was certainly without the knowledge of the dominant military party in Germany. The Emperor Charles's insistence on the necessity of secrecy—evidently sincere—shows that. The Emperor Charles did not propose a separate peace, but he was prepared to make one in the event of Germany proving uncompromising, and that eventuality was discussed. The confidence of Vienna in the ability of Austria to obtain German agreement was based on the belief that the mere announcement of an armistice between Austria and the Allies would lead to a revolution in Germany, and that the German Government knew it.

(2) Almost immediately after the failure of the first *pourparlers*, Austria made a second attempt through Count Revertera, who asked to be allowed to meet a distant relative of his, Major Armand, who is an official of the French Ministry of War. M. Ribot was opposed to the meeting, but M. Painlevé, his Minister of War, persuaded him to give way, and Major Armand had two interviews with Count Revertera in Switzerland in August. The Count asked to be put into touch with a more authorised representative of the French Government, but M. Ribot refused to allow the matter to go further. M. Painlevé, of course, knew nothing of the Emperor Charles's letters, but, at the time of the Revertera-Armand affair, M. Ribot informed him of the fact that proposals had been made in the spring.

(3) At the end of August Austria made a third proposal to M. Lazare Weiller, a French deputy of the Centre, who at once communicated it to M. Ribot. M. Ribot refused to take any action in the matter, and did not even consult the other Allies. According to statements made in the French Press on M. Lazare Weiller's authority, this third proposal included concessions to Austria.

While Austria was thus making continual efforts to open negotiations, Germany made in August, through a Belgian diplomatist, proposals to M. Briand, who was asked to go to Switzerland to meet Baron von Lancken or, if necessary, the German Chancellor himself. According to statements made on M. Briand's authority, Germany offered to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France and Trieste and the Trentino to Italy, but demanded compensations in the East; French territory was, of course, to be evacuated, and the integrity, independence, and sovereignty of Belgium unconditionally restored; Germany even offering to compensate Belgium for damage done. M. Briand, supported by the Belgian and Roumanian Governments, communicated the proposals to M. Ribot, and asked permission to meet Baron von Lancken, which M. Ribot at once refused. Thereupon M. Briand insisted that the Allies should be consulted. M. Ribot consulted the British and Italian Governments, who both replied in the negative, but M. Briand has expressed the opinion that the matter was put to them in such a way as to invite a negative reply. President Wilson and M. Kerensky were informed after the proposals had been turned down. An allusion to this matter by M. Ribot in a public speech in the Chamber led M. Briand to reveal the facts; a secret session followed, at which M. Briand vigorously attacked M. Ribot (who



was then Foreign Minister in the Painlevé Cabinet), and the latter was obliged to resign.

Such are very briefly the facts that the "Manchester Guardian" has made public. If their publication prevents peace proposals in the future from being turned down without proper consideration, I shall esteem my expulsion from France a very small price to pay.

ROBERT DELL.

A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

I SEE that the crowd in court applauded the Billing verdict: I can only speak of the sentiment outside, as I gathered it, and I should generally describe it as one of horror. The meaning of the finding of the jury I cannot tell. The jurymen might have thought "Salomé" a bad play, and its author a bad man, and have established some mental connection between that fact and the defendant's case. Let us charitably hope that this is all they meant. What they have *done* is to furnish a new broad channel for the sewage which has flowed day after day through our streets, polluting the world's judgment of this great country and its leaders. Every honest mind has, of course, tried to banish the reek of it, but it will cling. The judge insulted, the law tricked and defied, statesmen outraged, a vision of a bought and decadent society insinuated into an attack on a single stage performance—all this perpetrated in an hour of profound peril and boasted of as if it were a national service—how does the public like the look of it, now that the debauch of its week of sensation is over? I have heard it spoken of with despair. No event in my remembrance has ever been so blackly regarded.

THAT mood is exaggerated, but indeed the trial is a token of a mental lightness which goes with dizzy events. Astonishing as it may seem, there are people, not obviously eccentric, who admit to their mind the phantasm of the German "Black Book," filling up the list of the 47,000 according to their taste and fancy, and finding in the task the solace of a patriotic emotion. Why? Well, there is the grand neurosis of war. But there has also been a simpler cause, and that is the practice of continuous suggestion. Mr. Asquith and his family have been its chief victims; the Northcliffe Press its early and unremitting instruments. Where they sowed the Billings have watered; and the crop is this Bedlamite scandal. Lord Northcliffe made the Billing case, just as his Press introduced Mr. Billing to Parliament. Of no offender could it be more truthfully said—"Thou art the man!" Now Northcliffe-Frankenstein does not like the look of his Monster; but he should have thought of that before. The prevailing, the good and firm opinion, is an overwhelming one of sympathy for the sufferers and aversion from the wrongdoers. But it must assert itself or it may be overwhelmed. We have had our Billing affair, as France, about to plunge into the Revolution, had her Diamond Necklace case. We might take warning by the precedent. For there can be no doubt that Mr. Billing stands for a defiance of authority which delighted the mob. His gesture of utter contempt for our rulers finds a real response in the people's mind. The people are in a mood for blaspheming everybody. Mr. Billing interprets that mood.

For one victim there is indeed little sympathy. In the phrase of the arena, Mr. Justice Darling *habet*. He was not responsible for the case. That blame rests on the Public Prosecutor. If he had done his duty the evil would have been dammed at its source. But Sir Charles Darling has for years insisted on giving the criminal law case a theatrical turn, as if, in fact, crime were rather a joke, and, in any case, a pleasing drama. Well, he has had the joke of the theatrical show turned against him. The defendant evicted the judge from his seat and sat himself

there. The rest of the trial thus begun was sheer Colney Hatch. The play (which the judge never attempted to discuss and did not seem even to have read) was voted immoral, and the artist whitewashed; the 47,000 were judged to be relevant and irrelevant, guilty and guiltless; and the dark shadow of the Hidden Hand came down, like Ibsen's black hat, on everybody concerned and unconcerned. These were the findings of this eminently sane and well-conducted trial. The incidentals were not less refreshing. A doctor and a priest strongly condemned the book they had not read or the play they had not seen. The Black Book turned out a much more interesting stage "property" than "Salomé." There was only one copy of it; but it turned up in Albania, London, and Berlin; and though it was a dead secret, it was always being seen by somebody in the case. An ex-Whip (since honorably dead on the field) shows it casually in one hotel to one of these happy finders. He even points out his chief's name in it (which happens to be the Prime Minister), and mentions (at another hotel meeting) that it has gone back to Berlin. There are 47,000 Britons (or 53,000, the exact figure is doubtful) holding the most important positions in society, prepared to sell their country and addicted to unnatural vice; so that their instant removal and replacement by honest and good-living men must be vital to winning the war. But they are not removed—not even Mr. Justice Darling. So we appear likely to lose it. Such is the case as Mr. Justice Darling tried or rather did not try it. Such is the England which is not, and yet is presented to the world—allies, neutrals, enemies—as if it existed.

As for "Salomé," its vices, like its virtues, have been grossly over-stated. It is exotic work, like so much of Wilde's most accomplished writing, and its scent of the "Rose of Sharon" mingles with a breath of the "Fleurs du Mal." And it is open to a famous criticism of Tolstoy of all such embroderies of perfectly beautiful stories. But though "Salomé" spoils a beautiful thing, it is not itself devoid of beauty; though its atmosphere is heavy and sensuous, it opens a door or two to the fresh air, and though it handles noble things affectedly and often unscrupulously, it is not without tenderness. There is not much true passion in it; it is a glittering, finished piece of literary chiselling. But as for the grosser meaning attached to it in the article which was before the Court, only an obsessed critic would harbor such an idea. The play was never stopped or refused a public performance for its immorality: the ban was put upon it solely because it introduced a Scriptural character, and therefore offended against an old canon of the idiotic censorship which Mr. Justice Darling approves. The art of "Salomé"—to me, an indifferent and derived kind of art—soon loses its artificial charm of language and suggestion; but it is there, and its special kind of ornament, loaded and mannered as it is, is the mark of a famous school of French poetry which has had its followers and imitators in England and Europe, and will always have them. One apologizes for dropping even a word of serious criticism into such a very dirty pool. But that is an average literary judgment of "Salomé," and it is about the best and the worst that can finally be said about it.

"I ONCE saw 'Salomé,'" writes a correspondent, "on the stage in the strangest of all possible places. It was at Salonika, a month after the close of the second Balkan War. The demobilised army was pouring through the town on its way home to Greece, and the quays swarmed with officers bent on every available pleasure. The theatre was installed in the garden of an open-air café beside the famous White Tower. That tower was once a crusader's castle. I had penetrated inside it years before, when it was a Turkish prison packed with Bulgarian suspects. In the interval it had served the Young Turks as their committee-room. Now it decorated the pleasure-ground of the victorious Greeks. The performance, by an Athenian company, was a remarkably good one. They

spoke with admirable elocution, and acted with an abandon and directness which Wilde might not have approved. I had none of the sense that the play is mainly a fantastic literary curiosity, which is so oppressive when one reads the play with one eye on Beardsley's drawings. In this Oriental scene it seemed a natural rendering of Oriental passion. I had followed a Greek farce with some difficulty on the previous evening, and may have been unduly pleased to find that I could follow the limpid, simple Greek of this translation with ease. The occasion was perhaps too odd for criticism, but certainly I felt no moral repugnance. My companion that evening was Professor Miliukoff. In what camp of Cossacks or in what haunt of exiles is he now?"

MEANWHILE, I confess to being a little chagrined at the indifference which greeted my suggestion of a Lansdowne Government in an earlier number of *THE NATION*. But I expect a warmer welcome for an alternative combination, which, with slight variations on the accepted models of British Government, I would suggest as an appropriate tribute to the emotions of the hour: —

Prime Minister, Generalissimo, and Admiralissimo—Mr. Lloyd George.

Chancellor of the Exchequer and Keeper of the Privy Purse—Mr. Bottomley.

Secretaries of State: Home and Foreign Affairs, Colonies, India, Press Stunts, and War—The Harmsworth Family.

Ministers of Propaganda: (a) Secular—Mrs. Pankhurst; (b) Sacred—Father Vaughan.

Director of Intelligence—Captain Spencer

Divertor of Peace Offensives—The Bishop of London.

Minister of Education—The Editor of the "Daily Mirror."

Minister of Public Worship—The Editor of the "Sunday Pictorial."

Attorney-General and Director of Prosecutions—Mr. Billing.

Irish Secretary and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland—Mr. Garvin.

I WAS interested to hear Mr. Putnam's discourse on Free Trade to the Cobden Club meeting at the House of Commons. I need not recall Mr. Putnam's lifelong friendship for this country, nor his famous plea for America's intervention in the war. Both have been important elements in American politics. But his unchanged belief in Free Trade is equally worth recording. Mr. Putnam put the whole Free Trade faith to his audience with admirable lucidity and strength. I hope our Protectionists will note it. Clearly Mr. Putnam thinks that the after-war world must and will be a Free Trade one. Is not that already clear? And for two sufficient reasons. First, that it will be a world, every part of which will be equally famished for imports—imports of food, raw materials, every kind of industrial product. Secondly, that it will in particular be so badly off for food that the whole machinery of food taxes will have to go overboard. Dispense with them and with taxes on raw materials, and not much is left of the Protective tariff. The war has done one good thing: it has cleared the way to internationalism in industry. There lies the road to other kinds of internationalism as well.

MR. LYTTON STRACHEY'S "Eminent Victorians" has had, I suppose, the most instant success that any book of account has won in this generation. Its attraction is of style and of subject. In a sense, Mr. Strachey is in the fashion. We have done so magnificently with our own age that we have earned the right to look down on the Victorians; should any of us meet those primitives in the Shades, it will be interesting to have their retort on us. But the great merit and the fine accomplishment of the book are beyond all doubt. Mr. Strachey is a critic of the immortal school of Voltaire, and a little deliberately of the famous style of Gibbon. But he has

done a first-rate piece of artistry on his own account. If the Manning be thought a little too malicious, and the Dr. Arnold approaches caricature, the pictures of Gordon, in its rich combination of colors and effects, and of Florence Nightingale, in its wonderful intensity, do not fall short of masterpieces. It is possible to be rather hurt by Mr. Strachey's wit. His Manning impairs my boyish memories of that almost mystical (and mythical) figure, and I find myself a little pained by the jokes at Clough. Was not Clough in his way a kind of pious Byron, and was not the pageant of his bleeding heart a not unmoving spectacle? I shall always think so. Some of Mr. Strachey's incidental portraits are of astonishing brilliancy—notably that of Gladstone, and the book is sure of long life. This it will owe to its felicity of style and its finish and delicacy of moulding, no less than to its cynical wit and its perfectly serious and critical intention.

I HAVE been attracted to another book, of a widely different character to Mr. Strachey's. This is "The Diary of a Church-goer." It was published anonymously in 1904, and attracted some notice, though nothing like what it deserved. I may now say that it was written by the late Lord Courtney. It is a most unaffected and moving study of religious experience; brief but comprehensive in its account of the greater religious doubts and difficulties of our time, intimate in feeling, in tone calm and tender. I suppose it may be called an exposition of "Liberal Christianity," an attempt, in the author's words, to "get men to follow the guidance of a liberated spirit." Lord Courtney's decision was to remain not only a Christian but a Church-goer, and his confessions sustain this decision, and give it authority in the region of the soul and of the intellect. The conclusion is very beautifully expressed in a sentence which I will quote, because it conveys a double impression of the power of the Christian message itself and the charm of its association with the service of the English Church:

"Something in the air, something in ourselves, something, it may be, in the voice of the reader, on sunny mornings, in country churches, when the scents and sounds of summer come through open windows, in the equable atmosphere of some vast minster, when the words spoken at the lectern are encompassed in stillness—under all varying circumstances, defying calculation and explanation—the new comes out of the old, the passion out of the commonplace, and we say within ourselves: 'This thing is of God.'"

A REPRESENTATIVE man writes me from India:—

"What is happening in India is an intellectual mutiny. Like the old Mutiny, it is geographically a streak on the map. And its excesses drive the more conservative and safe-minded Indians on to the side of the Raj. But it is a very important movement, and can only be dealt with by sympathy, imagination, insight, and faith in our fundamental principle of freedom and moral self-determination. The possibilities here—economic and emotional—are immense. The intellectual material is sensitive and affectionate. The next five years will be criticized. We need more men of the character of Henry Lawrence, more applied science and vision."

A WAYFARER.

Life and Letters.

OF SENSIBLE FORGIVENESS.

IT is possible that the human race has now entered upon a generation, an age, or an æon in which war will be the normal state, and peace extraordinary; war the rule, and peace the exception; war continuing almost uninterruptedly, and peace breaking out only now and then. Some signs indicate such a possibility, and those who look to war for securing the survival of the fittest may confidently anticipate the evolution of very superior persons, while the less hopeful may attribute to an inscrutable Providence the design of eliminating mankind from





creation, and opening the way for another genus of animal, likely to do itself more credit.

But up to the present, at least within historic times, the world in general has regarded peace as the normal condition of man and war as the interruption. It is true that wars have been frequent—so frequent that very likely no decade has passed in which the historian could not discover a war in progress upon one point of the earth's surface or another; and a few nations, like the Spartans and the Zulus, have consciously organized their public and private life on a basis of perpetual warfare. None the less, people have generally assumed that peaceful life is more usual, and that one of the first objects of government is to secure or maintain peace, since otherwise, in the words of Hobbes, the life of ordinary men and women is poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Habits, customs, morals, and laws have grown up and been ordained for a state of peace. Common behavior, the ideas of right and wrong, the occupation of work and business—all the ways of daily life have hitherto been regulated by the belief that, on the whole, peace will generally prevail.

Hitherto this has been so in all civilized or partly civilized countries, and, consequently, war has come upon them with the shock of revolution. For it is not only laws that are silenced by arms. Nearly all the common notions of right and wrong, decent behavior, tolerance, and politeness, to say nothing of daily occupations, work, and interests, are shaken or completely reversed in time of war. To take the most obvious instance: however much you may hate a foreigner, or dislike his race, it is thought a capital crime to kill him in peace time, but in war it becomes not only allowable but your compulsory duty to shoot him at sight or to plunge a long knife into his vitals, provided that you and he are in uniform, even though you do not hate him personally and have never seen him before. Similarly, arson, the destruction of property, and the appropriation of other people's goods in the shape of arms, equipment, and machines are converted by war into essential duties, and kindly-hearted men, who in peace time would never refuse a meal to a beggar, justly congratulate themselves upon their skill in starving the population of a besieged town or a blockaded country.

Since actions which, in ordinary times, would be legally condemned, and morally regarded as atrocious, thus become simple and necessary duties in war, an alteration or reversal of moral conceptions is called for, and to some people the sudden change is difficult. It has to be so quick, and it seems so vast, that they are staggered by it. All their habits of thought and conduct are suddenly upheaved, as by a volcano. All their ideas of right and wrong, slowly and laboriously formed by religious precepts, social usages, and the laws, are sent scurrying at random, like ants when a sheltering rock is torn from above their nest. They perceive that a change, not only of public action but of heart and manners, is now expected of them. In the "Times" of May 24th, for instance, they may have read an extraordinary and, we think, an exaggerated account of the present "war-feeling" in America. It told how in Pennsylvania two men, suspected of German origin because "they made some guttural noise" on reading news of a German advance, were hurled from a train in motion:—

"One man fell on his face, the other went spinning round and was nearly knocked over by a passing motor. Within the train three lithe Americans laughed and resumed their seats, and the incident was closed."

In peace-time the incident might have been thought unmannly, but in war it was said to have received approbation; and the correspondent to the "Times" proceeds:—

"In the smoking-room of the Pullman only the war was being discussed; and I asked a citizen from the Middle West what he thought the effect would be if there were news of heavy casualties among the American troops. 'In my city,' he said, naming some Wisconsin township, 'it will mean death to the hyphens.' He meant, of course, people (and they were 50 per cent. of his neighborhood) who wrote themselves down as German-Americans."

"A few cases of lynching," the correspondent continues, "of tarring and feathering, and such delicate reminders of patriotic duty occur almost daily in the West and Middle West; but these excesses are not the most thorough-going signs of popular feeling. Bigger movements are on foot."

But enough has been said to show how perplexing the change in moral standards may be to some. Previous habits would incline them to think that the massacre of one-half of the population in a Wisconsin town because many American soldiers had been killed or wounded in France, would be generally condemned. Even lynching, which now, we are told, occurs almost daily in the West and Middle West, has hitherto been regarded with some disapproval. But, in the opinion of this writer, whose evidence we prefer not to accept without qualification, war transforms such actions into "delicate reminders of patriotic duty," and obviously the victims should be grateful for the lessons they thus gratuitously receive and diffuse. We can only say that, to many Americans, as well as to many in this country, so complete a change in moral judgments may add a perplexity to life.

And those who profess and call themselves Christians are likely to find the perplexity still more embarrassing. Take forgiveness, for instance—a quality often regarded as peculiarly Christian. At all events, it was specially ordained by Christ. It is prayed for in His prayer, used by all Christian Churches, and His recorded sayings about it are explicit. Forgive until seventy times seven; if you forgive others their offences, God will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, God will not forgive you—such injunctions are frequent and definite. They are but expanded by such orders as "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you." "Resist not evil, but overcome evil with good." But in war-time these commands are quietly or with loud insistence set aside, and when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Havelock Wilson, maintaining the more primitive law of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," clamor for exact retaliation upon the enemy, they utter the popular and essential sentiment of war. So does Lord Denbigh, in column after column of the "Times," as when he cries: "All the miserable gush about forgiveness is only calculated to have the opposite effect," apparently meaning that gush about forgiveness will not persuade the Germans that "war, under Prussian methods, is not really the paying business it has been in the past."

What especially stirred Lord Denbigh thus to condemn forgiveness in his letter of May 24th was a report of some observations uttered by the Archbishop of York in America last Good Friday. Four days later the Archbishop conciliated him by stating that the account was inaccurate, for he had really not recommended forgiveness to the extent reported. It appears that he touched upon the subject unwillingly; but, as he says, it could not be avoided, because the addresses at the Good Friday service were necessarily based upon the seven words spoken on the Cross, which unfortunately escaped the Roman censorship. One of the seven, as we know, was Christ's prayer that those who crucified Him might be forgiven. So, as the Archbishop says, he was "compelled by the occasion and by loyalty to his Master" to speak on forgiveness, but he calls it a most difficult subject. And we quite agree that for any Archbishop it is difficult. All the more do we admire the dexterity with which Dr. Cosmo Lang extricated himself. As an exponent of Christianity, he could not very well go back to the Old Dispensation of "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth," nor, remembering Christ's words, could he quite join Lord Denbigh in denouncing "the miserable gush about forgiveness." At the same time, it is hard to pray for our enemies, and one would naturally feel reluctance in exposing oneself to the patriotic assaults or reproaches of people holding Lord Denbigh's opinions and position. We fully recognize the torment of the dilemma. "Can we," asked the Archbishop in his Good Friday address—"can we with any honesty pray for the forgiveness of such as these?"—i.e., for our enemies, the rulers of Germany; and, with equal tact and good sense, he replied to his own question: "If, as Christians, we dare to pray for their forgiveness, this could not be a prayer that they

should be let off." We call that a sensible compromise, quite in accordance with the traditions of the Established Church which the Archbishop adorns and, to some extent, controls. If we can pluck up courage to pray for the forgiveness of Germans at all, let us not go too far in obeying the Divine paradox, but limit our petition to forgiveness after due penalty exacted. That is a sensible forgiveness—just about as much forgiveness as the public likes.

It is recorded of Monseigneur Myriel, known as Bishop Bienvenu, that, when warned against meeting murderous brigands, he replied, "They must need someone to tell them of God's goodness"; and when a hardened burglar whom he had fed and lodged, stole his silver plates, he inquired of him, "Why, Monsieur, did you forget to take these silver candlesticks which I gave you, too?" "You see," says Victor Hugo, "that the Bishop had a peculiar way of judging things. I suspect that he acquired it from the Gospel." The Archbishop of York is not nearly so peculiar.

THE RENT-PAYER.

"You remember rent? It was one of father's words—Rent to the ideal, to his faith in human nature. You remember how he used to trust strangers, and, if they fooled him, he would say, 'It's better to be fooled than to be suspicious—that the confidence trick is the work of man, but the want of confidence trick is the work of the devil.'"—E. M. Forster in "*Howard's End*."

THE paying of rent is a process peculiarly odious to the average man. To pay for one's food, one's clothes, one's amusements seems a right and a natural thing. But to pay for house and land, though they be only commercial commodities like the others, always rouses a spark of malignity, and those whose business and aspiration it is, rightly or wrongly, to kindle the fires of human indignation have through all the years of history made good use of this incendiary weapon. The merchant and the shopkeeper are never regarded in the same light as the landlord; yet they all hang their livelihood upon the peg of scarcity-value, and maintain themselves by buying cheap and selling dear. Even the grosser manifestations of war-time profiteering have not placed the merchants in the same category of public opinion that the landlords have always occupied. The reasons are not remote. Perhaps a subconscious impression that land and home are things peculiarly individual, and therefore least suited to be rented at another's pleasure, animates the popular mind: perhaps the monopoly is here more obvious and thus more objectionable than in the sale of other commodities. The fact remains that high rents are more intolerable than high prices, and that the appeal "Why pay rent?" has a peculiar fascination for the eye as it meets us on the hoarding or in the tube lift.

Just as man dislikes the payment of money-rent, so shrinks he from the rent of the spirit. Idealism is mainly dreaded because it is the parent of disillusion, and the mass of conservatism is based not upon love of the present or the past, but upon fear of the future. All the native pride of man resents the idea of being "let down," and all the reforms in the records of humanity have been bitterly opposed not so much as being evil in themselves, but as being paths to the unknown and short-cuts to insupportable disappointment. It is not only death that men fear, as children fear the dark: death is but a form of a change, and all change is terrible. Throughout society suspicion is the first attribute of wisdom and confidence the hall-mark of a fool. Cannot one hear the self-made coster's advice to a son? "Trust a bloke? Mug's game that is. Give 'em an inch and they takes a ell. If you don't watch out, some cove will spring it on you and you'll be buzzed." And similar sentiments find utterance at many a suburban fireside, when the modern son has been sowing his sternly intellectual wild oats. "Liberty and Equality, Peace and Fraternity, and all that sort of tosh—well, my boy they may be good enough as abstract ideas to be trotted out for an hour or two on Sundays when we exercise our dogs and our consciences before kennelling them up for the week; but

believe in them, act on them?—why the world would be in ruins in a week, and we should pay through the nose for all those copybook phrases. The rent of your ideals would be a hundred per cent. per annum, paid in poverty and disgust. Come back to realities. Look for a little and you'll not be disappointed."

Thus man would avoid the payment of the hated rent. But can it be done? Is the vaunted prudence of the realist inevitably and completely justified? True, the man who hopes for nothing endures no disillusion: he does not suffer the pangs of the ardent democrat who sees a vote won (after what struggles!), a tyranny overthrown (after what martyrdom!), and yet must live to watch humanity enchain itself anew and forge fresh fetters for the soul. All this the realist escapes, but if he will pay no rent for his spiritual home, justly he gets no view. Fleeing the deadening pains, he wins no thrill of triumph such as comes once perhaps in a lifetime to all "those mad, blind men that see." He has nothing of despair nor yet of ecstasy. No poet will sing of him:—

"There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee: thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

But the realist does not want these things. Far be it from him to seek an emotional switch-back or to toss in swing-boats of the spirit. He aims at reasonable comfort of body and mind, at a decent level, at security. But does the policy of unceasing suspicion lead him to peace? Does the want-of-confidence trick produce its desired effect? The world had been told as an axiom that the way to ensure peace was to prepare for war, and it obeyed. With what result? Seeking a monument we look around. "Ideals," said our suburban father to the son who had dared to see visions and dreams, "ideals would bring down the world in ruins in a week." We have had a long course of "real politik" and the result is not dissimilar. The man who devotes his every thought and his entire imagination to devising protection for his property is advertising for thieves as surely as he who leaves blank cheques signed upon his desk. Build your philosophy on the assumption of human villainy and humanity will come down to your expectations. The martinet's idea that every man must be treated as an offender until he can prove that he is not is most fruitful in offences, and the construction of checks and counter-checks against corruption seems to offer a stimulating challenge to humanity and to elicit from men of normal dispositions a sporting desire to pierce the defences. And so it is that Mr. Worldly Wiseman is often outwitted. He can afford to laugh at his son's visionary excursions to Cloudbuckooland: he pays no spiritual rent of dismay when wars break out or thieves break in. But while, self-satisfied, he grunts "I told you so," does he not pay in terms of police and prisons, of men and guns, of blood and tears? Prudence, as well as audacity, has its price.

One type alone seems able to win exemption. He perhaps may claim to live rent-free, who, caring nothing for material prosperity and expecting no stirring spiritual assertion from his own generation, exists in an intangible dream of splendid things that are fated certainly to come in this world or another. There springs to mind the memory of a little, grey Socialist preaching inflexibly in a North London park: he had neither gifts nor audience: his voice was thin, his manner unimposing, his matter jejune, musty, of the text-book. Of the park orator's armory he had nothing, no wit, no banter, no thunder, no cheerful abandon in the elaboration of a platitude or the rationalization of an absurdity. But year after year he never failed, never despaired of his effect upon a floating audience of two or three. Yet one felt that he did not suffer: his ideal claimed no tribute. For he had the faith which is certainty. He knew that "the nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange" meant paradise: and he knew that, whether they listened to him in the park or not, it must inevitably come. Not in this generation would the good thing happen, but happen it would. The iron law decreed it.

Or, again, a hundred visions will arise of souls despairing of this world, yet certain of the next. On

earth, they hold, are only miserable sinners, erring in a vale of tears: nothing is to be hoped of this life, which is but a training and a preparation. No disillusion can shatter such a mind, no suffering blunt it, for all its hopes and aspirations are centred on an unknown sphere, of which there is certainty. A morbid and a sterile faith no doubt, yet faith it is, and like the faith of that unquenchable Marxian, nothing can destroy it. These spirits, like the good pagan,

"From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,"

cannot be robbed or disappointed. They pay no rent in this world: whether they must ever pay is a secret of the grave.

But they are lonely, and rightly so. And those who take this life and this generation as centres of effort and anxiety are faced eternally with this burden of rent. How much may a man fairly expect, and where does idealism merge into barren folly? Indeed, the problem of living happily is largely the problem of knowing how much to hope, as the secret of good cooking depends, on expecting results only proportionate to the ingredients. To expect all and to lose all is to court despair and therefore sterility: equally empty, and, as we hope to have shown, equally imprudent and unprofitable, is the policy of expecting nothing. Here once more the sense of proportion, sweet reasonableness, is the supreme social virtue: to see the glaring failures of man and not to be blinded, to hear the glad song of honor rise from all the sons of liberty, and yet to mark well the myriads "who never sing, but die with all their music in them"; that is excellence. But in keeping this sane balance of outlook, it is well to remember that the realist is often out of touch with reality. He who laughs at high hopes, boasts that he knows the world: empty boast, for the world is unknowable. He may foretell with accuracy the doings of nine or of ninety-nine men in fixed conditions: but the tenth or hundredth man will defeat him. For this one will do the unexpected and preposterous thing, and so doing will create great evil or great good. Yet evil or good be the fruit, the case stands. Man is not determined either to an inevitable communist heaven or to a changeless mediocrity. History is not only the record of his crimes and blunders, but also of his marvellous uprisings. It is easy to abstract laws from the chronicle of events, yet what are these but serviceable fictions? Fictions indeed, for the hundredth man is always driving his impatient foot through the elegant structures of the student. History has many laws, but the greatest law of all is that there is no law. Humanity, the reeling drunkard of Meredith's simile, lurches, it is true, but he moves, and at any moment the forward step may come. Corruptions are swept away, tyrannies fall, and peoples rise—"Yes, but only to fall back," the realist intervenes. "Homesickness for the mud." Sometimes, perhaps. But that is beside the point. If man can rise once and do one tremendous and unforeseen thing, then he is free. Nine hundred and ninety-nine years he may sleep, but because of the thousandth year he is not dead. A peasant on his farm, a lonely prisoner in his cell, may kindle that torch that will destroy the rotten timbers of an age-long tyranny: the rods of the despot may blossom in the end. "All things move," said the weeping philosopher of Ephesus; but surely that was a text for a laughing creed. It is the flux of things that makes realism not always the surest investment, and gives to the dreamer an occasional and rich reward for the much rent he has paid to his ideal.

Art.

HENRI GAUDIER-BRZESKA.

IT is not without significance that the dominant impression which remains to me out of the many which I received from the exhibition of the works of the late Henri Gaudier-Brzeska now at the Leicester Galleries is not the memory of any perfect individual achievement

—though there are at least a dozen things perfectly achieved among them—but of the force which makes them one. There are many pieces of sculpture there which I shall never understand in themselves. They express realities which I cannot see and emotions which I do not share; they are technical researches into the possibilities of a material, partial visions of a sight which has deliberately chosen not to see life whole for the sake of the deeper comprehension which can only come from analysis pushed to the uttermost. In themselves they have for me little or no meaning.

But they are not in or for themselves. My abiding impression is not that of something I have tried to understand, but of someone I have triumphantly remembered. The strong, nervous, generous, passionate personality is there to claim each thing for his own and gather them together. It says, not "I did this—and this," but, "I was this—and this"; and, though much of the work which is now being shown belongs to a time when our paths lay far apart, I cannot deny the challenge. He was, indeed, all these things. A part of his spirit abides in them, and those which I do not understand are as familiar to me as those which I watched being made. The marks of his hands are upon them.

But a work of art must exist in and for itself. I do not deny it; I do not know. I do not know what impression this exhibition would have made upon me had I chanced upon his name and work as a stranger. I cannot believe that I would have mistaken the swift and certain vision of the master to be which is in the animal drawings which will be to many the sole guarantee of his genius. But all these things are as nothing compared to the memory of the living spirit which created them. The fact that the one impression should so outweigh, so utterly overwhelm the other has its meaning. An artist is a man *par excellence*. That Gaudier-Brzeska's work should now appear inadequate to himself takes nothing from the consummate merit of his work. He was this; he was all this; but he was more than this. At a time when he could not afford to work in stone, when all that he was allowed by circumstance to do was to fashion and refashion the same lump of borrowed clay, he said to me: "If I could only have a Pyramid, a hammer and chisel and a lifetime, then I would do something—a temple." He said that when he was barely twenty-one; and said it in such a way that I could not but believe him. Is it to be wondered at that his work, even all his work together, should seem inadequate to the eager, steel-tempered spirit which he was?

Let me therefore add my witness to that of Mr. Ezra Pound, who writes in his preface to the catalogue that to his mind Gaudier-Brzeska's death "is the gravest individual loss which the arts have sustained during the war." I am convinced that this is the truth. Mr. Pound can appeal to that part of the material evidence to which I cannot. He understands and can explain some of those later phases of Gaudier's work which are unintelligible to me. But, in the last resort, the material evidence is not enough—it could not be enough, for Gaudier had barely two and a-half years of real opportunity to work—to justify the extreme claim which is deliberately made on his behalf. The justification must come from the knowledge of those who knew him.

And those who knew him, knew before all things his strength. In every sense he was strong, incredibly strong. His physical endurance was miraculous. In the spring months of 1912, while he was still employed at a pound a week as a clerk in some minor Norwegian shipping office, he would rise with the dawn, do the housework for himself and his sister, and be in St. James's Park by 6 a.m. sketching the birds for two hours before he went off to the City. Then, on his return at night, he would continue modelling his lump of clay till past midnight. This went on every day. But his physical strength had another side to it than endurance. It was like a coiled spring within him, ready at a moment to leap forth into some nervous, passionate act. The forward-droop of his shoulders and head, the dragging glide of his legs, left one unprepared for these sudden revelations. After them, one remembered all his stories

of road-mending, poverty and hunger, his being left as a little child to fend for himself and others still smaller than he in the forests of the Orléannais. One saw in a flash what these grim experiences had shaped and by what they had been endured. Into this one body the nightmare history of the peasantry of France was gathered. Here was the Jacquerie, and La Bruyère's immortal vision; here was the Revolution and the Commune. You watched him leave you, trailing a cloud of dust along a Sussex road, and you knew for the first time in your life what *trainer la savate* really meant, how much of a world-corvulsing, elemental potency lies in the reality beneath the phrase and the people who coined it. For Gaudier was not a peasant with illusions, as Pégu; he had tasted too much bitter bread for that. There was far more of the Communard or Anarchist in him. He had an infinite pity for his suffering kind. His speech of Steinlen hardly remained this side idolatry, and he insisted on lending me the only two books he then had: they were "Jehan Rictus" and "Bubu de Montparnasse." But his very pity had made him hard. He expected nothing; he had steeled himself for life as for a merciless struggle. The class-war was an elementary reality to him; he seemed to have sucked it with his mother's milk. One felt that he had been schooling himself for years to fight a mortal combat with a beast of prey: therefore he had learned to move like a tiger. His alertness was terrible; but yet perhaps not more terrible than the implications that lay behind his generous utter abandonment to a passion of friendship, when his triple defences had been unknowingly pierced. And then—alas! for such unworthy timid fears—one was frightened at the sudden overwhelming jealousy of surrender.

We may live many years, but we shall not know such another as Henri Gaudier. He was not of us. The swiftness of his strength, the passion of his hatred, the desperateness of his determination, were not ours. He was French of the French. He made no allowances; he expected none. If they were made, or if he was confronted with the gesture of one prepared to make them, then and then alone was he disconcerted. In that hazy No-man's-land between fair play and foul, where flourish the conventions of which no Englishman is wholly purged, in that country alone his instinctive wood-craft failed him. There for an instant he would stand bewildered and uncomprehending. His view of the world demanded one sharp and final cleavage, and thereafter one unremitting fight with no quarter asked or given.

All this incomparable power was devoted to art, and art alone. The swiftness with which he cleared the ground for the basis of his pyramid will never be forgotten. The works in this exhibition are, in the case of such a man, more truly the chips which flew from his chisel as he trued the foundation out of the living rock for the temple to be, than things with a complete and final purpose of their own. In the long view this truth holds good of all great artists; but with Gaudier the truth was immediate and palpable. He could, one knew, rest nowhere long enough for it to be said, "This is Gaudier." His phases were like the moves and feints, the sudden approaches and lightning turnings-aside of the consummate fighter, who thinks of nothing save the final stroke which will give to all his movements their meaning. The onlooker could not grasp them all; some understood one thing and some another. The movements grew suddenly and as suddenly ceased; as they were called into being by the instinctive, creative struggle. That to which no one could be blind who watched him was the swiftness of his strength; and those who had seen that had no doubt that the final stroke when it came would be unerring, and in its perfection would reveal the purpose of his work and of himself.

It was he who was struck down at the age of twenty-four. Therefore, it is in our memory of the living man that we have to seek the unifying force to which Destiny forbade him to give the final, complete expression. But the occasion of his death serves to make it clear that this approach to him is right and fitting. The eagerness with which he returned to defend the country which

received him not and the signal honor with which he served her, show that the immortal qualities which he had, though they were given to art, yet had their existence in independence of it.

J. M. M.

Letters to the Editor.

THE MORAL OF THE BILLING CASE.

SIR.—There are many who will be disposed to sympathize with the eminent people whose names were dragged into that fantastic orgy of muck-raking called the Billing trial. But there is humor in the spectacle presented by the leading organ of the Northcliffe press wringing its hands in despair over the manner in which the case was conducted. The Editor of the "Times" deplored that it was as anxiously followed by the public as was the war news itself, and refers to the series of "promiscuous innuendoes" into which the case developed, and to the "astonishing laxity" with which much of the case was conducted.

A moral may be drawn from this notorious case. Whatever may be the rights or wrongs of the matter, the fact is that by means of a skilfully organized and completely unscrupulous campaign conducted in the Court itself, the public has been induced to regard Mr. Billing as a knight in shining armor whose mission in life is to destroy Corruption, Pro-Germanism, Pacifism, and other kinds of political and personal vice; whereas Mr. Asquith, Lord Haldane, Lord Grey, and other prominent public men are made to appear as the corrupt tools of their country's enemies. As a matter of fact, no evidence was forthcoming in support of either of these views. Nevertheless, so far as large masses of the public are concerned the fact that somebody has said that your name appeared in certain black book compiled by German agents is proof enough that you are a traitor. And whom have we to thank for such public ignorance? Only the very people who, in this particular case, deplore it.

The "Times" thinks it a monstrous libel on the nation that it should be thought that this country is paralysed in prosecuting the war by German blackmail on the private lives of thousand of men and women. But the public at large will believe it, and they will do so because they have been taught by the Northcliffe press to see corruption, intrigue and pro-Germanism where such do not exist. Public opinion can be lashed into believing anything of anybody. The Bolshevik Government of Russia, the Conscientious Objectors, the Peace by Negotiation group in the House of Commons the Russian Jew, the "Old Gang"—all these have been put in the pillory and subjected to the same kind of treatment as Billing has meted out to his enemies. They have all been the victims of mud-throwing. In the majority of cases they have had the additional disadvantage of being almost friendless in the Press.

It is quite right to ask for justice, even for those who have the Press of the country at their disposal; but who will ask for justice for the Conscientious Objector, the Pacifist, or the Bolshevik?—Yours, &c.,

EDGAR F. LANSBURY.

6, Wellington Road, Bow, E. 3.

ON EGOISM AND PUNISHMENT.

SIR.—The fact that "H. J. M." quoted me last week tempts me to say something about two different subjects. The one is egoism and art, the subject of "H. J. M.'s" article. "H. J. M." rightly thinks that art is not an expression of egoism. On the contrary, egoism makes it impossible; for egoism makes self-expression impossible. Thus, I do not express myself if I say "pass the mustard"; I express merely my own want for the mustard. Before I can express myself with regard to mustard, I must be interested in the mustard for its own sake, and not in myself and my wants.

True, I may be artistically interested in myself, but that is not egoism. Artistic interest in self is of the same nature as artistic interest in anything else; it is distinguished from egoism in that it has no further aim.

The words "pass the mustard" are general, like the noises of desire made by animals; there is no personality in them; a man is not himself in saying them. He becomes himself, and no other, when he forgets his ego and its wants. So the old Christian paradox is true—To be yourself, you must forget yourself—in something else.

The other subject is retributive punishment, which your reviewer considers in his review of Dr. Bosanquet's book. I believe that retributive punishment is the only right kind of punishment, but I disagree both with Dr. Bosanquet and with your reviewer about it. Retributive punishment is not good in itself but only better than the possible alternative, which is the blood feud. When we punish, it is not only because of the sin of the criminal, but also because of the sin of the injured. If the criminal is not punished, the injured will seek revenge, and there will be no end to wrong. Punishment does end it, or tries to.

So punishment should always be as light as the injury will permit. It is a *pis aller* until we are Christianized enough to do without it.

As for reformatory punishment, when it is good, it is not punishment at all but compulsory reform; and as for deterrent punishment, it has been the cause of the worst cruelties; because it also is not punishment but an attempt to deter and therefore often forgets to consider the criminal in its fear of his crime.—Yours, &c.,

A. CLUTTON-BROCK.

Reform Club, Pall Mall, S.W. 1.

THE INDICTMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

SIR.—With reference to the article "The Indictment of the Public School," in the last number of THE NATION, may I point out that one result of the war is to remove these schools still further from a controlled place in our educational system. Nearly every one of them has organized a memorial fund. In the case of one of the wealthiest of the schools the amount subscribed approaches a quarter of a million pounds. These funds become new endowments, the interest being used to educate the sons of old boys.

It is questionable if there is any considerable need for this form of relief, but in any case the result is to make the schools in question even more exclusive, and to make yet more difficult their inclusion in any co-ordinated democratic system.—Yours, &c.,

E. W. D.

May 28th, 1918.

SIR.—May I thank you for the article on the above subject in your last number. The writer of it refers to "Hugh Fendall." Among other things, this book illustrates the social isolation of the public school system. The only touch the boys get with the people and conditions outside their little world is through the school mission. Here is an extract from Hugh's diary:

"The mission fellows came down for their beanfeast. They seemed to like playing cricket and singing sentimental bosh and bathing best, though how we shall like bathing this evening I don't know. . . . At seven o'clock, when we'd filled 'em up to the front teeth with tea, they all collected in a bunch at Great Gate . . . and said how jolly thankful they were, which they jolly well ought to be, and then hooked it back to their slums."

And so a traditional social outlook, far removed from any real sense of brotherhood, is strengthened.—Yours, &c.,

AN OLD BOY.

May 28th, 1918.

SIR.—It is not for me to attempt to defend the Public School system, more especially since, in my own case, being in a bad house, I hated mine. But at the same time I think it is worth remarking that the case against the Public School can be overstated, and that damage will be done to the cause of reform if the prosecution acquires an hysterical note.

First of all I would like to point out that it is not always what happens in the school that matters. It is what is ultimately made of the boys that matters; the general run of boys, not the particular. I defy the attackers of the Public School system to point to another system, French, German, Italian, Russian, or Spanish, which produces a consular class like to ours, which is generally reckoned as just, tells no lies, and is universally acknowledged to be unbribable. The Public School does undoubtedly produce a sort of public sense of honour. Our consuls, colonial administrators, and civil servants abroad are undoubtedly unbribable. I do not think the same can be asserted with such confidence of any other service save, perhaps, that of the United States. The same may be said of the class which entered the Old Army, a class which, however much you may justly or unjustly object to some of its characteristics, did and does possess an excellent sense of Honour of the sort that you will find glorified by Alfred de Vigny, the only writer who has ever understood what "soldier" means. Again, in South America, the Public School boy has, as a rancher, farmer, or miner, won such a position that, if any Argentine wishes to express to another Argentine that he will keep his word at all costs, he does not say, "On my word of Honour," but "On the word of an Englishman." It has become a proverb.—Yours, &c.,

A YOUNG MAN WHO HATED HIS PUBLIC SCHOOL.
June 1st, 1918.

THE SECRET TREATIES.

SIR.—While thanking you for your courtesy in publishing in your last issue my criticisms of your reviewer's mistaken assertions as to the extent of the territories allotted to Roumania by the treaty of August, 1916, I must ask you to allow me to add a few further details of fact such as will, I hope, clear me from the charge you level at me of "confusing the issue." The facts are so clear that I must apologise if I have failed to state them properly.

(1) The terms of the treaty are no longer "secret" as the main facts have been published in the Russian press by the Bolshevik Government, and, indeed, for a long time before that they had been known to Roumanians and friends of Roumania here. Apparently, however, you are unaware what the exact territorial limits assigned to Roumania were. Otherwise you could not persist in your assertion that the new Western boundary of Roumania was to be the course of the Theiss and that she would therefore have included "some of the purest Magyar country (Hajdú, Szabolcs, part of Szolnok, and Csongrád, &c.) with Magyar populations reckoned

at 98 and 99 per cent." Even on the basis of the abridged summary of "Roumania's demands to M. Sazonov on May 1st, 1915"—which you take, I notice, from the account telegraphed to the "Manchester Guardian" by Mr. Phillips Price on February 8th last—you should, however, have realized that a frontier running "north past Szegedin and Debreczen" could hardly include any appreciable part of the counties of Szolnok, Hajdú, and Szabolcs, though it might be taken to mean that Roumania was to obtain "part of Csongrád."

The correct facts are these: The new frontier ran well to the East of Szegedin, Hód-Mező-Vásárhely, Gyoma, Füzes Gyarmat Debreczen and Nyiregyháza. The county of Szolnok fell completely outside it; only tiny corners of the counties of Csongrád and Hajdú were included as well as a slightly larger but still very small portion of Szabolcs (about one-fifteenth only of the whole of Szabolcs).

(2) Your assertion, then, that "clearly Roumania did demand the whole country between her own frontier and the Theiss," is, I must once more and this time categorically repeat, incorrect and an unjustified allegation. As I explained in my former letter, the mistake about "the Theiss frontier" arose from the Roumanian cry: "To the Theiss!" which refers not to the whole course of the Theiss but only to the Theiss frontier of the Banát (and, of course, again to the Máramaros district where the Theiss again forms a rough racial frontier). To adopt your own parallel, it is as though everyone who supports the reunion of Alsace with France, which would bring part of the French frontier "to the Rhine," should, therefore, be accused of supporting chauvinist demands for a complete Rhine frontier for France.

(3) The treaty of August, 1916, may not have been perfect. Roumania—it is arguable—should not have claimed or been allowed, as she was, what I called "the almost purely Magyar county of Csanád," nor the part she obtained (between one-quarter and one-third) of the county of Békés, in both of which—but, be it remembered, according to Hungarian statistics—the Roumanians are in a decided minority. Perhaps Mr. Bratișanu was unduly anxious to make a good strategic frontier. Considering that he was dealing with the Romanov Court and the Stürmer Government, perhaps you will agree he may be excused for demanding every territorial and other safeguard obtainable for the new Roumania. But let us not lose our sense of proportion. Examine the map and the population statistics and you will have to admit in fairness that fully nine-tenths of Roumania's territorial gains would have been justified on racial grounds. It would be curious to attack her fiercely for asking for Csanád and a quarter of the county of Békés and to leave out of account her legitimate demands on Transylvania, the Banát, and the greater part of the counties of Arad, Bihar, Szilágy, Szatmár, and Máramaros.

(4) "Secret treaties" may or may not be iniquitous. Let us grant that what is more important and more satisfactory is to consult the wish of the populations concerned. Well, in this particular case, I have not the faintest doubt that if allowed the right of self-determination the great majority of the population in question—excluding again, perhaps, Csanád (and the quarter of Békés concerned)—would vote for free union with Roumania. The welcome given by the inhabitants to the Roumanian army of liberation (which was repeatedly denounced by Magyar deputies and admitted by the then Hungarian Minister of Justice, Mr. Balogh, as the ground for reprisals), the savage régime of repressions which followed—executions, long terms of imprisonment, confiscations of property and "planting" of "trusty" Magyar settlers on the frontiers (now pushed, alas! forward into the Wallachian foothills)—all show what is the feeling of the inhabitants. The enthusiasm of the Transylvanian prisoners of war for the idea of fighting on the side of the Allies is another proof of this feeling. A considerable number of these Transylvanians took part in the brilliant Roumanian fighting of last summer, and many thousands now in Russia and Italy are keen to follow their example.

I ask you to publish this letter in the interests of truth, of Roumania's good name, and of Liberal principles.—Yours, &c.,

A. W. A. LEEPER,
Hon. Secretary, Anglo-Roumanian Society.
5, Old Burlington Street, W.1.
May 28th, 1918.

[Mr. Leeper has the advantage of us, since we have only the summary of the Treaty before us. We must accept his statement that "the line of Theiss" was not, over its whole course, adopted as the frontier. Even on his showing, however, the frontier included two big countries (which he does not mention) of Hungary proper in which the Roumanian element is a decided minority, Szatmár and Bihar; and in these alone over half-a-million Magyars are brought under alien rule. The soundest part of the Roumanian claim is to Transylvania, but even there the Roumanian element is only a bare majority, 55 per cent. Throw in the whole mixed and Serbian Banát, and the Ruthene districts of the Bukovina (where Mr. Leeper admits that criticism is justified) and add these mainly Magyar counties and parts of counties between Transylvania and the new frontier, the result cannot possibly be a Roumanian majority in the whole area to be annexed. At the highest the percentage is not over 40. Whether all these Roumanians by race desired to enter an area where the peasantry was economically and politically so depressed and oppressed, as it was in the Roumanian Kingdom, raises a further issue. On the mere basis of ethnography, the Roumanian claims were dan-

gerously excessive. On that main point we have nothing to withdraw, though we may have been led into some slight error by the King's proclamation and the telegraphic summary of the treaty, which did together convey to us the impression that the Thesis over its whole course was the proposed frontier.—ED., THE NATION.]

THE PRAYER OF AN ARCHBISHOP.

SIR.—I hold no brief for the Archbishop of York, whom I have never seen, but I think that "A. B." is unduly severe upon him. Neither religion in general nor Christianity in particular, is all of one piece; or a thing of one text or set of texts. If it were so, "Thou art Peter" might make us Papists; "Resist not evil," Quakers; "My Father is greater than I," Arians; and so *ad infinitum*. Such constructions break down. The same Teacher who said "Love your enemies," drove traders from the Temple with blows, and hurled the fiercest invective at his opponents; and St. Paul's openly expressed wish for the future of Alexander the Coppersmith shows another temper than that of the Sermon on the Mount. Anger has its place in religion, because it has its place in human nature; and it has its place in Scripture, because Scripture is not a pietistic tract, but a record of human nature and of men. And a wise man will observe times and seasons. We are bidden to "make prayer for kings." But, if the Archbishop were to announce a Day of Prayer for the German Emperor in his Cathedral, he would, very properly, find the benches empty; and, if the organist were to give "Deutschland über Alles" as a voluntary, he would, very properly, find hassocks and hymn books thrown at his head.

Also, it is perhaps just possible that the fortunes of men and nations are ruled by natural causes—"he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good"—and are unaffected by the prayer even of an Archbishop.—Yours, &c.,

A LIBERAL CHURCHMAN.

June 2nd.

UNITY OF COMMAND.

SIR.—In your editorial notes in last week's NATION you say in a comment on the Prime Minister's reference in his Edinburgh speech to unity of command on the Western front:—

"That policy again is very much on its trial. All that the public know about it, and the new treatment of reserves which it has involved, is that it coincides with the two greatest reserves of the war."

Without arguing the merits or demerits of the policy, may I remind you that unity of command only became an accomplished fact after the reverse of March 21st?

Until General Foch's appointment as Generalissimo (officially announced on April 1st) there was no unity of command on the Western front. The Supreme War Council at Versailles came into being in November, 1917, after the Rapallo agreement. The council was not endowed with the executive power until the ensuing February, when a committee on operations was formed with General Foch as chairman. It is no longer a secret that the Versailles Council intended to create a strategic reserve—an intention frustrated by influences beyond its control. From all one hears, Generals Haig and Pétain cordially approved of the idea of a strategic reserve, but insisted that it must be created from new troops, as their infantry was barely sufficient for the needs of the battle-line. So far as the British Army was concerned, we know that our infantry had been considerably reduced between November, 1917 and March, 1918, and that in the latter month it was holding a longer line with a diminished force. This diminution in bayonet strength was not compensated for by the fact that on March 1st, 1918, the British Army was stronger in machine-gun corps, in field guns, in tanks, and in the Royal Air Force than at the corresponding date in 1917. No strengthening of other arms can make up for a great reduction in infantry.

The opposition of the British and French Commanders-in-Chief succeeded in hindering the creation of the army of manoeuvre. In the result, the Versailles Council, despite its "executive power," had no authority to move a single battalion; and at the Allied Conference in London early in March, held in the knowledge that the German offensive was imminent, the French and British Governments had to be content with the assurances of Generals Pétain and Haig that they themselves would make the necessary dispositions of the reserves.

These facts are indisputable and they prove, I submit, that unity of command did not become a reality until after the first of the two reverses to which THE NATION alluded.—Yours, &c.,

A LIBERAL JOURNALIST.

London, June 3rd.

[The Rapallo agreement and the Versailles Council were designed to secure unity of command on the Western front, and although the Council "could not move a battalion," it could and did move a whole army to a long front. When General Foch actually became Commander-in-Chief we are not competent to say; but it was certainly before April 1st, and the attack of April 9th, which swept across the Messines Ridge, was unquestionably a serious defeat. We did not say that General Foch became Commander-in-Chief before the March battle, but that unity of command and the treatment of reserves it involved coincided with the two greatest reverses of the war, and when all the facts are known this will prove to be true. It must not be understood that we are blaming General Foch; he is undoubtedly a great commander. What we wish to insist on is

that unity of command cannot do all that many indiscreet writers and loose thinkers suggest; and it remains a moot point whether massed manoeuvres and all the other desiderata of the supporters of the policy could not be obtained as well if not better without one Commander-in-Chief. The conditioning factor of the Allies' defensive is that of the numerous nations and still more numerous races it involves.—ED., THE NATION.]

AN APPEAL.

SIR.—The urgent problem of protecting our fighting men from the ravages of venereal disease has made all those interested in social work carefully consider their obligation towards the Army and Navy. It is stated on good authority that one source of infection is the promiscuous intercourse between these men and young girls who, owing to abnormal conditions, are not under proper discipline. It is felt, therefore, that a special effort must be made immediately to deal with this aspect of the problem in the most humane and far-reaching manner.

Metropolitan magistrates have ample evidence of the great unwisdom of the present system which obliges them when remanding young girls charged with soliciting and other similar offences to send them to prison for the period of remand. The need of some sort of Clearing House to which girls on remand and admitted to bail could be remitted by the magistrates has become very urgent.

The Committee of Social Investigation and Reform are anxious to open such a house in London, and they believe that the need has only to be made known to evoke a generous response from the public. The proposal is to accommodate not more than twelve girls in one house in order that it may not have the atmosphere of an institution. To this house girls admitted to bail could be sent by the magistrate instead of going to prison, and it could also be used for young girls on probation and for those taken direct from the streets. Here they would be tested as to their suitability for various employments, and would be kept for a short or long period until full enquiries had been made into their circumstances and into their physical and mental condition. Provision would be made for all those requiring medical care and their supervision would be carried on after they had left the Clearing House.

Such, in very brief outline, are the objects which the Committee have in mind in appealing to your readers to support them in a piece of constructive social work. The project has received the warm support and commendation of a great many men and women interested in social affairs, notably: Sir George Cave, Mr. Clarke Hall, Mr. Cecil Chapman and other Metropolitan Magistrates, Sir Malcolm Morris, Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, Dr. Helen Wilson, Mrs. Creighton and the Rev. William Temple.

At least £1,000 is needed to inaugurate the scheme, and a regular income of not less than £600 per annum will be required. Donations should be sent to the Honorary Secretary, Committee of Social Investigation and Reform, 19, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.—Yours, &c.,

HENRY BENTINCK.

Poetry.

THE SECRET GARDEN.

THERE is somewhere a secret garden, which none has seen,
In a place apart
But amid the bramble-bound world, the thicket, the screen
To the understanding of heart.

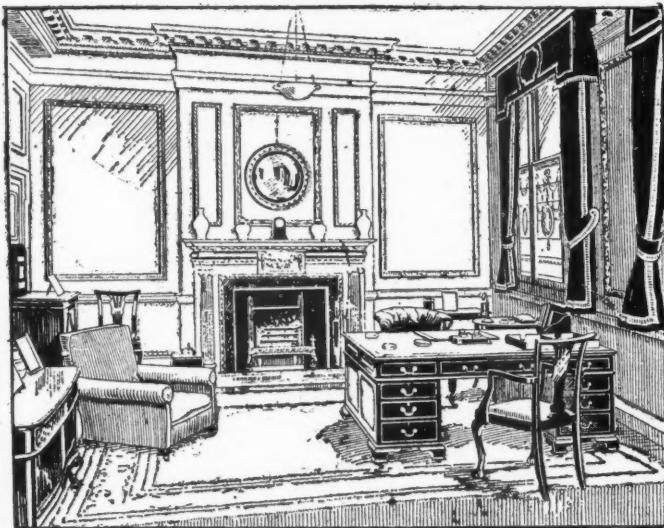
There is somewhere a secret garden, where none has been,
Where Night and Day
Commingle, where the sun and the starlight's sheen
Shine ever, where ever the moony fountains play
Lifting their lily-like throats, tossing their spray
Wherever the rainbow meets, red-hued, serene,
Where the flame-dripping branches are brighter green,
Where the roses burn richer, richer than tongue can say;
Where the gardener walks in His garden unheard, unseen.

There the flowers wait
Abasing each noble head
Till He draw nigh,
Then exalt their lovely faces to Him, rose little, rose great,
Flower of pale or flower of passionate dye
Under his eye
Till softly He lift a hand, and the Land is spread
Blessing their beauty, their peace with a word like a sigh.
There is somewhere a secret garden, where none has been,
Or, glimpsed, lost to their grief,
There would I bide, though I ever abode unseen
A snail or a stone under the lowliest leaf.

ROBERT NICHOLS.

1916-1918.

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BETWEEN THE LARCH- WOODS AND THE WEIR

By FLORA KLICKMANN,

AUTHOR OF
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THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

- "In the Fourth Year." *Anticipations of a World Peace.* By H. G. Wells. (Chatto & Windus. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "The Contemporary Drama of Ireland." By E. A. Boyd. (Talbot Press, Fisher Unwin. 5s. net.)
- "Three French Moralists." By Edmund Gosse. (Heinemann. 6s. net.)
- "Frenzied Fiction." By Stephen Leacock. (Lane. 4s. net.)

* * *

THE château is one that "H. M. T." knows well, one of the many French country-houses which have been lived in by war correspondents. Very likely he has made acquaintance with it closer than mine, in one of those intervals of weeks, or sometimes months, when the front is quiet and the war correspondent finds it hard to occupy himself. During one such period I browsed among its books several afternoons running. There is no library in the château. The bookcase serves instead. Wide and high, it stands in the upstairs corridor, which runs the length of the house. I had, from time to time, picked out for my bed-book a volume of Molière or de Musset, and I had considered tackling a History of France in twelve stout tomes which caught my eye every time I passed. I read on the title-page that this was the work of a Jesuit father, and I felt sure it would be instructive to follow his point of view. But I shrank from the thought of an adventure so prolonged. Now, through those leisurely afternoons I browsed and tasted, not reading steadily, but taking sips, as it were, from many vintages of word and thought.

* * *

FEW were exhilarating ("brisk on the palate" would be the taster's formula, I think). Few possessed that virtue which is known in wine as "body." But what to a bibliophile would have seemed the defects of the bookcase were to me attractions. The collection had a definite character. It reflected the mind of the noble family that put it together. I knew they had been of the Monarchist persuasion. If I had not known this the books would have told me. One of the first I pulled out was "Portraits des Princesses des XVII. et XVIII. Siècles." I think I never gazed upon so many inane and tiresome faces, so many figures in stiff, unnatural positions. The one delight the volume gave me lay in discovering that the sole representative of English princesses was . . . "Madame la Duchesse de Portsmouth," if you please! This and the Jesuit father's twelve volumes would alone have shown me what was the noble family's attitude towards the past.

* * *

In face of the attitude of the Château, affectionate, reverential, towards

"The little great, the infinite small thing,

Which ruled the world when Louis Quinze was king," one is forced to ask oneself whether, after all, the Revolution was as much of a benefit to France as to some other countries. It cannot be in any way good for a nation to be divided into bitterly opposed factions. In France these factions sent their roots down deep. In a billet which I occupied a few nights ago in a French village there hung on the wall an address in laborious copperplate handwriting presented by the sons and daughters of the family to their parents on their golden wedding-day, celebrated thirty-five years ago. In this, allusion was made to the birth of the father in 1792, during "the impious and detestable uprising against the authority of God and the Monarchy." After ninety years, resentment against the Revolution smouldered as fiercely among those village folk as it did in the breasts of the aristocrats who filled these bookshelves. Only during the present war has the French nation laid aside its domestic quarrel, have Legitimists, Orleanists, Imperialists and Republicans dropped their differences and become "Frenchmen first." A century and a quarter had to pass before the great gulf fixed between the Traditional and the Actual could be bridged.

THE noble family's view of the Present—not our Present, but their own, which has already heaped over it the dust and débris of a generation—was thoroughly in keeping with their regretful and obstinate clinging to the past. Piles of "L'Action Française," the Monarchist magazine, filled the lowest shelves, gathering more dirt there every year. Succeeding editions of the fashionable Paris address book, known in the dark period of the XIXth century as "La Société et le High Life," were annotated with ticks against the names of relations and acquaintances. Most tell-tale of all, a large, richly-bound scrap-book, red leather, gold tooling, contained all the wedding invitations received during a quarter of a century. Its twin was bound in black and filled with invitations to the funerals of noble friends.

* * *

THE choice of British authors translated into French was just such as you would expect. Nearly all of the Romantic period. The novels of Sir Walter Scott, Byron's poetry, Sterne. There was also Milton, literally translated, which I hope no one ever read. It ought to be impossible to read "Paradise Lost" in prose, shorn of the sweetness and vigor of Milton's language. There were, of course, the French classics of "the great epoch," even Voltaire, but only his "Théâtre." I searched vainly for "Candide," or even "Charles the Twelfth." There was "Chefs d'Œuvre de l'Éloquence française," and suchlike biblia a-biblia, of the kind that are sold in the United States in vast quantities and high prices, not as books, but as furniture. Here and there outcropped some vein less ordinary, though not more precious in metal. Thus, two volumes called "Mon bonnet de Nuit" contained the nocturnal excursions into the obvious of some Polonius of the Second Empire. "It is my custom," he explained, "to write down every night before I go to bed my impressions of the day, all I have seen, felt, thought and heard, the subjects of my reading and my conversations. How pleasant it is thus to talk to oneself, pen in hand, nightcap on head." Which proves that bores delight in boring themselves when nobody else is by.

* * *

THE one signpost to any personal taste in the whole bookcase was an array of books of travel, the dull, geographical sort; enough to ballast a three-hundred ton schooner; heaps of bound-up travel magazines, "Le Tour du Monde," "Le Magasin Pittoresque"; a serried regiment of "Geographie Universel." I had visions of the noble family reading these by lamplight in the salon with portraits of ancestors and Royalist celebrities on its dim walls, just as Mrs. Voysey read about the Chinese. Still, I was grateful for this interest in travellers' tales, since, though most were tedious, one caused me prodigious entertainment. By "Quinze Jours à Londres" I was not instantly attracted. I supposed it to contain the usual guide-book information; but, opening it idly, I found myself caught with the nameless author's hook in my jaw from the first page onward. I read with increasing joy to the end. The writer went to London after Napoleon's defeat. His book appeared in 1817. He disliked London exceedingly, and said so. He disliked Englishmen, their institutions and their food, their customs, their coffee, and everything that was theirs. Yet he spoke his antipathy so frankly and with so amusing a petulance, conscious of making a good story, that he arouses no antagonism.

* * *

I sympathized with the fellow. We did, and some of us do still, drink horrible coffee. Our Sundays were dull and hypocritical. We did, and do still, borrow much of our drama from France, and spoil it in borrowing. Our mode of heating our houses left, and leaves to-day, much to desire in the way both of warmth and cleanliness.

I should like to prescribe this work for the perusal of all who talk glibly about "progress." Most of the Frenchman's criticisms might be passed with equal justice to-day. We have even gone back to the methods of the *Alien Office*, which kept the author of "Quinze Jours à Londres" three days at Dover before it would allow him to pursue his journey. We must see to it that such petty tyranny is not practised two years after this war has ended.

H. H. F.





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Reviews.

CIVILIZATION.

"Civilization, 1914-1917." Par DENIS THÉVENIN. (Mére de France. 3 fr. 50.)

"I MUST first ask you what you mean by civilization," says the man who recounts the culminating vision which gives M. "Thévenin's" book its title, but he does not stay for an answer. For him civilization is exactly the horror which he describes. He will have no more of it. When the war is over he will go apart into a high mountain where he may be seen no more of men, far away where he can no longer hear the drone of the aeroplane or encounter those perfect mechanical devices which once amused him, but in which he now discerns the cause and the essence of the war. And when he has told of the experience which brought this insight to him he says:—

"We are all wrong about what is happiness and what is good. The most generous souls are all wrong too, because silence and solitude are too often denied them. I had a good look at the monstrous motor on its throne. I tell you civilization is not in that thing any more than in the shining pincers which the surgeon uses. Civilization is not in all that terrible paraphernalia; and, if it is not in men's hearts, well, then it's nowhere at all."

The little chemist who speaks has faced the dilemma like a man and made his decision. Civilization is not in men's hearts, therefore he will go apart from men. He is become solitary in his kind. He is still a man, but men—are men no longer.

What right have we to believe it on the word of a little chemist that civilization is not in men's hearts? The rest of M. "Thévenin's" book, like the "Vie des Martyrs," is an answer to the question. But, before we accept or can even understand the answer, we need an answer to the question: What is civilization? M. "Thévenin" gives this only by implication; when he is most definite it is once more through the life of the little chemist that he speaks:—

"I'm often thinking of civilization, real civilization. In my mind it's like a choir of harmonious voices chanting a hymn, a marble statue on a bare hill, a man who says, 'Love one another' or 'Return good for evil.' But they've done no more than repeat these things for two thousand years, and the kings and priests have far too many interests in this world to think of other things like them."

Civilization, then, is for the little chemist a spirit of beauty, of harmony, of love. So perhaps it seemed to be; so perhaps in some tight-shut compartment of our hearts we still conceive it. But is it true? Can it possibly be true? Is there any reason beyond our own desperate desire that it should be true? Or, rather, is there any reason to believe that civilization is necessary to the world?

The civilization of the little chemist comprehends all the spiritual ideals of the conscious mind. He knows that the world denies them now because men's hearts deny them; therefore he who believes in them still denies the world. But even if it be proved that men's hearts do deny them, can it be that ideals which are denied by the world really belong to the world? If the world denies them, do they any more exist? How can they be valid still? Life has rejected many forms in its age-long movement. It has created many things, only to leave them to die. If we are honest surely we must admit that the consciousness which created for itself the ideals of beauty and harmony and love may also be left to die. The ideals themselves are withering away like the figures of a dimly-remembered dream. We waste no tears over them lest they should blind our vision of the way to get on with the war. And if the ideals may perish, may not the mind which bore them also be smitten with decay?

But, again, if we are honest—the last virtue left to us—we must admit that perhaps those who, like the little chemist, believed that civilization was the process by which those fading ideals were helped to dominion in the world were always a small minority. So many, we have come to learn, paid them only lip-service. The words were current, but the reality far away and uncomprehended. To one man perhaps in a thousand civilization meant order and beauty and love; to the nine hundred and ninety and nine it meant, as it once did to the little chemist, aeroplanes and wireless

telegraphy and motor-cars. And, indeed, they were part of civilization. They were the means by which the mind of man slowly established dominion over the material world; they were the instruments of the triumph of the human spirit. In their office they were justified and were the objects of a lawful pride. But now they have become the instruments by which the very vehicle of the human spirit is shattered:—

"I could hardly recognize him. His whole body was shaken by a hideous, inhuman trembling, like that of a pole-axed beast in the slaughter-house. His feet and hands were twisted as though in a convulsive struggle. His purpled face was skewed towards his left shoulder. He dribbled and showed only the whites of his eyes"

That is the picture of the death of Lieutenant Dauche, an officer wounded in the spine. To that use are turned the conquests of material civilization. The servant, shaped by the mind of man, has escaped and become its master, and civilization has created the means to its utter eradication.

And though it seems a nightmare fancy that civilization, the perfected human consciousness, should thus prey upon its own vitals, why should it not be so? Only because the idea revolts our sense of order and beauty and love. The destruction which strikes direct at the consciousness which created that sense, a sense which is valid only so long as its royalty is recognized by human minds, is justified by its own success. But let us not drag out into the light of day these battered phrases about "justification," patriotic toys of a childhood the world has forgotten. The horror is, and the protesting mind is not. And we who do still utter our small word of abhorrence know beforehand that it will be swept back to us by the wind. The little chemist is a man, and men—are men no longer. Humanity is divided: the few are for the old ideals, the many are against them. Therefore the few must flee into the mountains, where they may forget that their ideals are old, and that if they would speak of them they speak to deaf ears. Says the doctor who has charge of Lieutenant Dauche:—

"There are problems we cannot solve. I'm not speaking of God. Even the idea of God seems to have no interest in the great catastrophe. I'm not speaking of God, but of men. We ought to say quite simple things to them: there are wounds we cannot heal. Then don't let them inflict any more of these wounds and then the problem won't exist. That's a solution; but the men in my profession are too proud to suggest it to the world, and the world is too mad to listen to them."

To tell the world that it should inflict pain deliberately no longer, that is the solution, and there is no other. If the world will not listen then nothing remains but to beat one's head against the wall. The world will not listen. The nine hundred and ninety and nine do not know what pain is unless they are called upon to suffer it themselves. In the "Vie des Martyrs" the terrible truth was told: "L'être humain souffre toujours solitairement dans sa chair, et c'est pourquoi la guerre est possible." The abyss between one man's pain and another's mind can be bridged only by imagination, only by the same faculty which acknowledges allegiance to the ideals of the human consciousness.

So we turn and turn in the evil circle, and there is no escape. Let them be confronted with the reality, cries M. "Thévenin":—

"There is nothing more horrible or more painful for the soul than to hear the raving and the pain of men whose brain is wounded, or to see a young man of twenty spoil and filth himself like an old man, and I have longed, as I ate my heart out before these shameful spectacles, that those who hold in their hands the destinies of peoples should be brought in to contemplate them. But let us leave that aside, alas! You cannot give imagination to those who have it not."

For those who have no imagination even the sight of the reality itself will be without effect, and it is with all the bitter loathing born of a knowledge of pain that M. "Thévenin" records the words spoken by "a fat civilian, charged with God knows what mission to the armies," to a man lying silent on his bed, having felt all the agonies of wounds:—

"You seem to have been badly hit, my man. But if you only knew the wounds we give them with our seventies! Terrible wounds, *mon cher*, terrible!"

That is one of the men who hold in their hands the destinies of nations.





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As in "Vie des Martyrs," so in this book M. "Thévenin" sets himself to reveal the nature of pain to the world, as a doctor having neither pride nor fear, but as a poet also. Just as before, we are caught unaware by the commonplace, unfathomable words into which the martyrs crowd their infinity of suffering. Slowly the fear-haunted dream becomes a nightmare, and as we read the quiet record of the things that are the passion of protest rises within us. This is not real, we cry; this is not true. But the passion sinks again into the despairing consciousness that this is the reality, while we, our mind, and the loyalties in whose name we protest, are the dream. It is life itself which has vilely cast us away. By the old standards it may be that we are sane and loyal, but sanity is a matter of majorities, if loyalty is not.

War has delivered up consciousness to the instincts, the minority to the majority, the individual to the herd. If imagination or reason had held sway over the minds of men the war would never have begun; if calculation or interest, it would have ended a year ago. That it continues is a proof that there is no response to the appeals of the reason, whether they come from the higher or the lower part of it. And even M. "Thévenin's" wonderful, pitiful book, which should be an appeal and a challenge to mankind to keep the flickering flame of imaginative understanding alive, becomes at such an hour as this the cruel acid of a doubt. Its implications are devastating. The only way of escape it offers is indicated, by implication again, in the group of stories which tell of the conscious prostration of the human mind before the military machine. At least these leave the hope that in the armies themselves, if nowhere else, imagination may be hidden but not dead. But even then we ask ourselves whether it can survive so long suppression. And if it can, will it ever be given the opportunity to emerge again? When we think that such of the soldiers as may return will return to a world where leisure is unknown, we remember the little chemist's words: "We are all wrong about what is happiness and what is good. The most generous souls are all wrong, too, because silence and solitude are too often denied them." In the world of peace which will follow this war there will be neither silence nor solitude. Then our last hope must be that the outraged human consciousness will insist on living not by bread alone. It will flee to the mountains, whether in the spirit or the body, and let the old order fall into the ruin it has deserved.

THE MIDDLE CLASS.

"The English Middle Class." By R. H. GRETTON. (Bell. 8s. 6d. net.)

MR. GRETTON's book is a brilliant essay in definition. He starts with an eleventh-century England in which no Middle Class is discernible, isolates such a class at the earliest moment of its appearance in the social organism, and traces its steady pervasion of English society, till he leaves us with a nineteenth-century England, where it is hard to find anything untouched by Middle-Class influences. Our chief quarrel with him is that in staking out his field he did not take a still wider one. A successful definition is often a philosophy of the whole thing of which the thing defined is a part, and Mr. Gretton's analysis of the Middle Class is really a *prolegomena* to a social history of England. Continually as we read we feel that he is taking for granted a larger background, and when we come to his new renderings of new problems (which are many and fascinating) we do not doubt his ability to demonstrate them, but regret that he has given himself little space to do it.

Mr. Gretton's definition of the Middle Class is precise: "It is that portion of the community to which money is the primary condition and the primary instrument of life." And he shows how the great epochs in the development of the Middle Class coincide with epochs in the multiplication, circulation, or utilization of the currency—the liberation of the Jews' and Templars' hoards at the end of the fourteenth century, the flow of American bullion in the sixteenth, the new methods of public finance at the time of the seventeenth and the eighteenth, and the expansion of the banking profession in the early nineteenth. All these monetary changes

were taken advantage of by the Middle Class to extend its holding in English society, and Mr. Gretton has a very vivid idea of the class character which has found its opportunity in these circumstances. He sees the Middle Class secretive towards its superiors, treacherous towards its weaker partners, acquisitive of the substance of wealth and power while instinctively shirking responsibilities towards the State. Its first stronghold is the medieval town, and one of its earliest class achievements is the *firma burgi*, or composition with the King's Exchequer, for a lump sum of taxation agreed upon and guaranteed by the municipal authorities in lieu of an assessment of the individual townsmen by the Royal officials. In its exemption from the burdens and exclusion from the prizes of normal feudal society, the Middle Class finds scope for its more spiritual ambitions in the building of cathedrals. But it is not clerical in sympathy—on the contrary, it unobtrusively withdraws itself from the moral and intellectual influence of the Church by endowing a Middle-Class system of education—the Grammar Schools. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it is investing in land and prospering so by the process that it commits its one great historical blunder—for Mr. Gretton's analysis of the Commonwealth is that it was a Middle-Class experiment in the direct government of the State, which miserably broke down. Thereafter, the Middle Class drew in its horns and reverted to its traditional subterranean methods. It takes the professions into its bosom, assumes the garb of gentility, concentrates itself in privileged trading companies and causes the community to wage imperialistic commercial wars. The last stage is industrialism, and we take leave of the new capitalist in the characteristic act of deserting the new working class which had helped him to win the Reform Bill (political power) and the Repeal of the Corn Laws (cheap labor), just as the medieval merchants of the town deserted the lower orders of townsfolk when the exploitation of municipal self-government had served their turn.

It is a frankly hostile delineation, and such corporate baseness, sustained through centuries, is not altogether easy to believe in. We are reminded a little of another brilliant book—Mr. Reinach's "Orpheus"—in which Religion (pilloried, if we remember, in some more merciless definition) is satirised from the totemistic phase down to—the Dreyfus case, on which M. Reinach happened to hold strong views. In fact we wonder whether Mr. Gretton's views on the social effect of the Middle Class at the present time—though they are no doubt amply justified, like M. Reinach's views on the persecution of Dreyfus—do not to some extent distort the perspective, in which he envisages the Middle Class back to its eleventh-century vanishing-point. We do not mean to question the connection he traces between a certain economic use of coined money and a certain social character. His discernment of it is often illuminating, as, for instance, in the chapter in which he shows how the nineteenth-century factory system was brought about as much by the development of banking, which put coin in circulation for the payment of mass-wages, as by mechanical inventions. But the psychological effects of coined money, which he so brilliantly establishes, are surely not so much the attribute of a class as a quality which spread over the whole nation, as currency became more and more a general instrument of its economic life. The study of this psychological process is really the subject of the book, and Mr. Gretton's treatment of it as the study of a class tends, if we may venture to say so, to get in his way, especially towards the latter end. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when not only trade but industry, the professions, and the ownership of the land have succumbed to the Middle Class invasion, the vital social—and even psychological—divisions are to be found in the bosom of the Middle Class itself. Mr. Gretton is too honest an investigator to close this over; he admits the contrast between the owner of East India Stock and the rising industrialist and the descendant of the sixteenth-century draper who bought an estate in land, but he admits it rather with regret. Yet from the evidence he puts before us one might well deduce, not the continuous existence of a Middle Class, but the fluidity of all classes in England, the constant formation and dissolution of class-groupings by the triumphant march of money and the psychological idiosyncrasies which money brings.

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BRITISH BANK OF NORTHERN COMMERCE.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of this Company was held on the 5th inst.

Mr. H. Bendixson presided, and in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, referred to the loss which the Bank had sustained by the death of their Chairman, the late Earl Grey, and by the death of two other directors, Mr. Kielland Torkildsen and Consul-General Faber, both of whom were original members of the Board.

The business of the bank had continued to show steady and very satisfactory expansion. Current deposit and other accounts showed the large total of £22,754,517, as against £9,408,026 a year ago. That was a very remarkable growth, and was proof of the confidence reposed in their institution. The bulk of that money continued to be represented by balances held here for Scandinavian clients, and as long as the war lasted and exchanges continued adverse to this country, such deposits were more likely to grow than to diminish. The number of their clients had also increased very largely during the year.

The general banking business, on the other hand, showed no such expansion—in fact, the opposite; but this was inevitable in view of the restrictions caused by the war on neutral trade. The Scandinavian countries had suffered more in this respect than any other neutrals, except perhaps Holland. They were further suffering from the collapse of trade with Russia, where they previously had a good and rapidly growing business. It would be hopeless to attempt to forecast when they would again be able to resume their activities there, but when the time came the Directors would be ready to avail themselves of every opportunity presented.

On the assets side their cash in hand and money at call or at short notice totalled £9,038,528. The profit and loss account showed a net profit of £74,463 8s. 7d., and the Board was confident that the shareholders would look upon the result as satisfactory, especially when the difficult times through which they had been passing were taken into account. There was an available balance of £96,397. An interim dividend of 6 per cent. free of income-tax had already been paid and the Directors now proposed a final dividend of 12 per cent., also free of income-tax, making in all 18 per cent. for the year—the same as for 1916—leaving £28,897 to be carried forward.

The signing of the Anglo-Swedish agreement last week would prove to be an important factor in the relations between England and Sweden, and should prove of great advantage to both nations. There should shortly be an improvement in the trading between this country and Scandinavia, and as trade got freer and less restricted they should commence to reap the full benefit of the work upon which they had been engaged since the establishment of the bank in January, 1912.

We can imagine unfriendly foreign critics calling the book "A history of how England became a nation of shopkeepers," and Mr. Gretton himself maintains that he is describing a specially English phenomenon. In the fifteenth century he contrasts the secretive English moneymaker with the ostentatiousness of a French Jacques Cœur (hardly sufficient evidence by itself, perhaps, for arguing a national diversity of temperament), and in the eighteenth he puts down to English middle-class characteristics the failure of the French Revolution to find an echo across the Channel. "The French nobleman believed himself to be by divine providence where he was; the English" (middle-class) "nobleman never attributed to the Deity the victories of his own self-assertion. . . . In England the barriers" (between classes) "were in the last resort only relative. There was no claim to any incomprehensible natural rights; there was only property, held in a way which any Englishman could understand."

Yet is this unattractive social phenomenon so peculiar to ourselves? Do we not recognize the same symptoms in Solarian Athens and Gracchan Rome? And are not our neighbors only a generation or two behind us in taking the same road? We described Mr. Gretton's book at the beginning of this review as a prolegomena to the social history of England, but we are inclined to think that as a sociological study it has a wider import still.

SELF-HELP AND SMILES.

"*The Story of My Life.*" By the Right Hon. Sir EDWARD CLARKE, K.C. (Murray. 15s.)

"It will take you years to learn," said a famous newspaper proprietor who found his office boy with a grammar book, "but if you are diligent and persevering with your studies you may some day become a sub-editor." And the poor boy did. No man can avert his fate. Edward Clarke, a youth in his father's shop in the City, having more than an average aptitude for self-improvement, spent some years over books of rhetoric, logic, law and history, to fulfil a desire for political power inspired by "Coningsby," "Sybil," and "Tancred" (he is very proud of his literary tastes). He wished to stand among the statesmen, and later he did, though later still he counts it the only bad luck in a career otherwise of unmitigated success. The bar, which for forty years made him a rich man, was to be merely a stepping-stone to a political life. He all but reached his goal, but it was decreed, despite those years of grinding at books, that his ambition should remain unsatisfied. He had all the qualities for political success except one. A strain of dishonesty might have saved him. There was promise in that episode of his childhood where he took a few shillings from his father's till to buy a book, but his conscience did not permit the promise to ripen. That unlucky conscience has been with him all the days of his life, bidding him to defy his leaders and to stand for causes hated by his party. He reaped his reward.

Did Sir Edward expect Mr. Balfour to be grateful to a colleague of twenty-five years who had helped to obtain for him a seat for the City of London when Manchester had rejected him? It shows a trusting nature. In the Tariff Reform debate that opened the Parliament of 1906, when Campbell-Bannerman castigated Mr. Balfour for his "foolery," Sir Edward Clarke, whose views did not accord with those of his leader (so far as the latter's had any definiteness at all) nor with Chamberlain's, maintained the opinions he had expressed outside the House. He had a premonition that it would be his last speech in Parliament. The Tariff Reformers determined to drive him out. At a public meeting Mr. Balfour, whose safe anchorage in the City was largely due to Sir Edward, was cold and unfriendly:—

"If he had desired to retain me as a colleague a word from him would have stopped all trouble in the City. But he not only refused (as I have since learned) to interfere in the matter, but he declined to express an opinion when appealed to by the City people, and his silence was understood, as I have no doubt he meant it to be understood, as showing a desire to get rid of me from the House of Commons."

Ordered by his doctors to give up either his political or his professional work, Sir Edward Clarke informed Mr. Balfour by letter that acting on medical advice he was resigning his seat. Mr. Balfour telegraphed acknowledging the letter and promising to write. The letter was never written. If behavior of this sort is usual in political life the wonder is how Sir Edward survived into old age in such an atmosphere. But his physical vitality and powers of resistance seem capable of any strain. Merely to glance at his programme of studies and work when a young man, or just to hear the recital of his legal and political labors in later years, would make most people feel it was time to go to bed. But Sir Edward Clarke could never have known the weakness of his fellows. He counts his career a happy one, despite the political disappointments. In every other respect was it not a great success? The yearly income is given to prove it. Very well. Will not future generations linger over the beauties of the six forensic speeches by which Sir E. Clarke hopes to be remembered? And they can study in this volume, too, the architecture of the moving peroration which is "intended to sweep away any lingering doubts by the confidence of its rhetorical appeal." The proud barrister shows how it is done. On those rare occasions when the forensic spell-binder finds the thought and the apt word coming without effort, and voice and gesture instinctively giving "melody and force to the flowing period," there is an "intense enjoyment to the speaker." We can well believe it.

There are few anecdotes and little secret history in these reminiscences, but they repay reading as a study in character. Sir Edward is rigid and correct in his speech, never an epigram nor a frisky phrase is suffered to mar the even respectability of his manner, as becomes one for whom the "Life of Sterling" is "almost the only thing that Carlyle wrote in decent English."

PLAIN AND COLORED.

"*Mrs. Bente.*" By C. E. LAWRENCE. (Collins. 6s. net.)
 "*In Russia's Night.*" By OLIVE GARNETT. (Collins. 6s. net.)
 "*Where England Sets her Feet.*" By BERNARD CAPES. (Collins. 6s. net.)
 "*Pieces of Eight.*" By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE. (Collins. 6s. net.)

THE novelist has a wider choice of themes than the low comedian, who is said to be restricted to seven elements in compounding a joke; but the power of modern fiction is increasingly shown in the taking of a heavy catch from the old fishing grounds, the capacity to squeeze the unsuspected further drop from the orange which an impatient appetite would leave aside as dry. The flavor which C. E. Lawrence distils in the pages of "*Mrs. Bente*" is bitter and pungent, and comes from close under the rind. To describe the story as merely an adaptation of "*Beauty and the Beast*" would be to let its essence evaporate. For it is the subtle, and philosophic adaptation of the old *motif* which makes it impossible to give a summary of the plot without exaggerating the plainness of the tale. Bente is a curate who marries a courtesan for the sake of her salvation, and Miss Parker—Christian name Ellen, business name Poppy—marries Bente for a change. He takes her out of the slums to Nuneholm, a suburban village "cursed with a sense of extreme prosperity." As "a clergyman's wife and a colonel's daughter" she floats for a while on the tide of its inane and material society, but soon begins to sink of her own weight. He struggles to keep her afloat and plunges again, with her on his back, into the swirl of London. But she leaves him, after a brief and horrible struggle, to swim alone in the upper waters of her own muddy stream.

Bente is just not such a *Beauty* as to be incredible, and Poppy so completely a *Beast* as to be satisfying to the critic. His rough Vicar and his muscular fellow-curate in the London slums, his angelic aunt and the Laodicean Rector of Nuneholm with the familiar acidulated wife, are commonplace figures whose purpose is to keep in check our tendency to disbelief in Gervase Bente himself. They maintain a sufficient tone of reason to persuade us that the desperate act of his marriage and his desperate remedies for its results

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RAPID GROWTH OF BUSINESS.

INCREASE OF THE RESERVES.

THE NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the City Equitable Fire Insurance Company (Limited) was held yesterday at Winchester House, Mr. GERARD LEE BEVAN, Chairman of the Company, presiding.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY (Mr. F. J. Witts) having read the notice convening the meeting and the certificate of the auditors,

The CHAIRMAN said:—Gentlemen,—I suppose I may follow the usual course of taking the accounts as read. Since our last meeting I am happy to tell you that Mr. H. M. Grayson has joined the board. His name is a household word in shipping circles, and in view of the increasing importance of our marine business, his expert knowledge and life-long training ought to be of inestimable service to us. Unfortunately, he could not be present with us to-day, as he is engaged on a Government mission.

THE ACCOUNTS: THE RUSSIAN BUSINESS.

Turning to the accounts, you will observe that the premium income on fire account amounts to £458,375, as against £357,769 last year—a most gratifying increase. The total amount of all claims paid and outstanding, on the other hand, is only £9,000 higher, at £229,843, the loss ratio thus having dropped to 50 per cent. Of course, the reduction is partly due to the new business on which losses have not had time to mature. Still, making due allowance for this, the figures are highly satisfactory. Our income is derived entirely from English and general foreign sources, as we have no commitments worth speaking of in America.

This year we have also had to omit our Russian business from the account. We have done so with the full concurrence of our auditors, simply and solely owing to the impossibility of obtaining up-to-date advices from Petrograd. It will be within your recollection that this branch of our business was started about two years ago, when our manager paid a visit to Russia. He then concluded treaties with several of the leading companies there. Some of them we have since dropped, and those we now retain are only with the very *elite* of the Russian companies. Our general manager still believes that this field will eventually prove remunerative in spite of the temporary eclipse of the great Slav Power; but in any case, the volume of business we are now transacting there is so small that it could not materially affect the accounts. While I am dealing with the Russian business, I will ask you to cast your eye for a moment on one item in the balance-sheet. On the debit side it is shown as a "Reserve in respect of sundry outstanding balances," the amount being £20,504. On the other side that figure is included in the cash at bank. This represents the difference in our favour between our debit and credit balances on Russian account, in so far as we know them. In view of the uncertainties attaching to the entire position, we have decided provisionally to write off the whole of this sum, so we have deducted it in the appropriation account. In effect, therefore, we have treated the whole of our Russian business as in suspense. At the same time, I am sure you will agree with me that we ought to keep a foothold in that country. However delicate the connecting threads, it is of the utmost importance that the Allies should cling on to their relations with Russia; it is of the utmost importance that we should endeavour to form a sort of nucleus there, both political and commercial, round which the better elements in Russia may gradually gather. Then when the time comes—as come it must—that the Russian people reawaken to a sense of their greatness, they will surely turn with especial gratitude to those who have never lost faith in them or forsaken them in the darkest hour of their calamity.

The outstanding event in the year's fire annals has been the conflagration at Salonika. Seeing that so large a portion of our business consists of general foreign, it was rather a crucial test for us, and when I tell you that our total participation in that disaster did not exceed three or four weeks' ordinary losses, you will, I think, acknowledge that it reflects great credit on our manager, and is the best possible tribute to the sound principles and correct methods on which he regulates our business. It may interest you to know that the manager and myself have visited Paris on more than one occasion, and have succeeded in securing treaties with several of the leading French companies. Every fresh link forged in unison with those marvellous Allies of ours is a matter for reciprocal congratulation, and we cordially hope that the relations which we have opened up there will prove to be of a permanent character, and to our mutual advantage.

MARINE BUSINESS.

As is only natural, it is in the Marine Department that the largest expansion has taken place, and our premium income for the year has been no less than £740,038. Of course, you appreciate that the volume of marine business now passing is altogether without precedent, and that our figures, like those of other companies, are swollen by the underwriting of war risks. It is a purely temporary business, and may lapse at any moment, but apart from this we have now established such a valuable and far-reaching marine connection that, even when we revert to normal times, we believe that we can not only maintain, but even improve upon, the figures in this year's balance-sheet. You will note that we are holding £360,868 against unexpired risks, which works out at close on 50 per cent. The risks attending navigation are enormously enhanced as an outcome of the war. Nor must we expect a return to pre-war standards even with the advent of peace. The loss of so many gallant and experienced captains, the mines that strew the seas, the condition of the vessels themselves—all make for increased hazards, so it is only right to forewarn you that, as our war business runs off, it will be incumbent on us to hold considerably larger funds in hand against unexpired risks—perhaps as much as two-thirds of our premium income.

FINANCIAL POSITION.

There is little in the balance-sheet which need detain us. Investments are £336,989, as against £164,321—an increase of £172,668. Loans are up £9,000 at £39,000; while the cash in hand is virtually doubled at £123,394. Our reserves with the ceding companies are somewhat lower; on the other hand, the outstanding premiums are up no less than £300,000 at £625,911. This, as I have previously explained, will always be a commanding item in our accounts, though I venture to hope that under normal working conditions we may get in our premiums with less delay than we do at present. Our income from investments is £21,425, as against £10,030, which, added to the amounts brought down from the fire and marine accounts, makes a total profit of £128,251. With last year's carry forward—namely, £18,740—we have in all £146,991 to deal with. As already mentioned, we have charged against this our Russian balance—namely, £20,504. We have also made provision for income-tax and excess profits to the tune of £27,025. We believe that we are again erring on the liberal side, but the question of insurance companies' liabilities for excess profits is still under consideration. Speaking broadly, and regarded purely as a war emergency measure, no fairer means of raising revenue could be devised than the creation of this tax, but in its incidence there are bound to be inequalities, and after three years' trial it is recognized that it bears rather hardly on young businesses. Insurance companies are in a somewhat peculiar position. In the course of their business they have the temporary use of considerable funds, so it is difficult to appraise exactly what capital they are employing in their business, but some allowance must surely be made for this fact, some also for the uncalled liability on their shares, which, at all events in the earlier stages of a company's history, helps it to build up its business. I venture to submit that the principle applied to marine business—namely, that of allowing so much per cent. on a company's premium income—might also be applied, though perhaps with some modifications, in the case of its fire business.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS.

The balance available after deducting these and one or two other minor items amounts to £96,657, out of which an interim dividend has already been paid of £5,625, reducing it to £91,032. We propose to pay a final dividend of 9d. a share on the Preference and 3s. a share on the Ordinary shares, making 1s. a share on the Preference and 4s. a share on the Ordinary shares for the year—a small increase on last year, though, I admit, only a nominal one. But if any of you are inclined to be disappointed that it is not more, I would appeal once again to your patience, and feel confident that in the long run that virtue will be rewarded. As the income grows from our accumulated funds we shall be justified in increasing our distribution, and next time we meet I hope we shall be able to exercise more generosity; but meanwhile our principal object must be to buttress and fortify the company's position in every possible way. We have therefore transferred £55,000 to our additional fire reserve, making it up to £80,000. We have created an additional marine insurance reserve, with an initial amount of £10,000, and we have added £2,020 to our general reserve, rounding it off to £90,000, this last constituting a sort of third-line reserve available either for purposes of fire or marine. After making these provisions there remains a balance of £7,137 to be carried forward to next year's account.

(Continued on page 267; Col. 2.)

are not inherently unconvincing. Poppy, in her relations with Bente and others, is alive with a painful and irresistible vitality. As a parishioner of Bente's, she and her landlady, "an accessory, though quiescent, both before and after the fact," in 8, Alma Terrace, lived precarious and sordid lives, and "had come to hate each other with a narrow completeness." One night Miss Parker accosts Gervase in the street, and a material improvement follows. Able to restore her wardrobe and "supply the touches of rouge necessary to disguise with warmth her hollow and sallow cheeks," she won back the self-respect which comes with "the consciousness of decent shoes and elegant underclothing." "She could not fall in love simply because she had lost, even if she had ever possessed them, the necessary illusions." But when Bente does not call she misses both his company and his money, being in debt to Mrs. Barnes for "the more expensive luxuries that had been recently purchased to augment the poor cheap things—kippers and stale haddock, potted meats, fly-blown ham, tongue, confectioneries, and such-like, she had fed upon." The unity of tone with which her environment is delineated does not fail in application to her character. Some novelists resist the temptation to make their pretty ladies too pretty, and Poppy, with her thin, brown neck and straight black hair and unsatisfactory complexion, passes that test. Almost all excite our incredulity by making them too lady-like, too capable of the realization and expression of their own range of feeling. In Poppy this crucial difficulty of the artist is triumphantly handled, for she has been, by her own account, a governess, and was "taken advantage of" in an employer's house. Poppy is not merely a drowsy syrup but an irritant poison. She despises Bente in the moment of accepting him for kissing her "nervously, yet placidly, first upon the cheek and then upon the forehead." She is his governess in the art of love, and her love sows in him the concomitant passions of jealousy and hatred. She can seduce or scourge with tongue or pen, and persuade decent people that she is out of place in her profession. When she beards the three clergy in their vestry, "the Vicar, at all events, and possibly Arthur Jerome, realized with Gervase that she was not essentially vulgar in spite of her trade: but was a person whose past had been spent with some circumstances of refinement." But the intellect of the "fairy gone bad" enables her to comment upon their offer of the home of refuge from "this wretched East End existence" with "I could try the West End; I had thought of Regent Street," and to save Bente from strangling her by leaving him with the admirable ironic letter, in which, having written:—

"By the way, you may be interested to know that my father was not a colonel in any army, and his name was not Parker. He was an underpaid curate with too large a family."

she signs herself "Ellen" and adds a postscript: "Even that is not my real name. What liars we all are!"

Miss Olive Garnett's novel, "In Russia's Night," is of threefold excellence. Its subject, Russia in 1905, must interest all who are moved by the fate of that tragic country; its standpoint, that of a young Englishwoman married to a Russian, combines sympathetic intimacy with critical detachment; whilst the style with its sincerity, naturalness, and limpid ease, has caught no little of that natural magic which seems the birthright of the Slav. If we are reminded of Turgenev it is as much by the beauty of Miss Garnett's writing as by her study of a civilization essentially unchanged since the appearance of "Virgin Soil." We see the same social forces and counter-forces at work, listen to the same interminable analytical conversations, pursue the same wild hopes and desperate ideals of the outlawed and the martyred, learn with the old despair the victory of evil and of darkness. The story, which begins with a scene of delightful comedy, ends with the abortive Revolution of 1905, and a tragedy which would be unbearable if it were not for the beauty of its telling.

Mr. Bernard Capes's careful study of social life in the sixteenth century, his florid, euphuistic style, and picturesque eye for detail, are employed with good effect in "Where England Sets Her Feet." The story of Brion Middleton, bastard son of Leicester, is of uneven interest, and we could dispense with much of the lengthy love-making of two young persons whose time would be better bestowed on chap-book and embroidery frame; but Clerivault, "the fantastic," is a well-conceived figure, and his exuberant

patriotism will earn him the welcome of all who are fond of a repetition of their own sentiments. The best things in the book are the descriptions, such as that of the procession of Elizabeth to hear a preacher at St. Paul's Cross.

In literature, as in farming, the rotation of crops is a sound principle, and since Stevenson took such a rich harvest from the field of piracy and treasure-trove no one has cultivated the same ground with comparable success. Mr. Le Gallienne makes the best of an almost exhausted soil by bringing his story down to 1903, when archaic speech has no longer to be employed like an artificial manure to stimulate the imagination. There is a first-rate moment when the pious black sea-cook and the hero find the skeletons of two murdered men still bent over a card-table in a cave. But treasure-hunting is a man's work, and Stevenson, the resolute opponent of dilution in fiction, did well to close such a hot, breathless, bloody, rum-flavored world to women. How well we realize when Mr. Le Gallienne's new golden girl intrudes her disturbing emotions into the happy fabric of make-believe. "Pieces of Eight" is written, as would be expected, with an accomplished ease; but it is insignificant work for the author of Mr. Le Gallienne's poems to produce in the maturity of his powers.

The Week in the City.

CONSIDERING the seriousness of the German advance, the firmness of the Stock Markets has been remarkable. I am told that the general feeling of members remains quite optimistic. The dividends have evidently flowed largely into War Bonds and War Loans, in accordance with the appeal made by the Governor of the Bank. Money Market rates have been low generally at from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 per cent. Consols ex div. stood at 56 on Wednesday, a remarkably good quotation, and French Fives were maintained at $77\frac{1}{4}$. Dullness prevails in Rubber shares, but the demand for Zinc Corporation continues, and among Industrials Siemens has been a feature. I hear that a good deal of criticism is being directed against the Zinc post-bellum contract made by the Board of Trade. Zinc is likely to be very cheap after the war. Interference with trade by Government and the spread of bureaucracy is becoming more and more unpopular, especially among merchants and shopkeepers. One important and satisfactory event which should be chronicled here is the conclusion of our commercial agreement with Sweden, which is certain to be of advantage to both countries. Possibly it may relieve the paper situation. If the food problem becomes easier, we could afford to import more pulp.

LIPTON'S PROSPERITY.

Two years ago the directorate of Lipton Ltd. was reconstructed, and partly, no doubt, on this account and partly owing to war conditions the past two years have shown remarkably good results for shareholders. In the years 1914-15 and 1915-16 no dividend was paid, but for the year 1916-17 a distribution of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was made. The report for the year ended March 9th last shows a further large increase in profits, and a dividend of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—the highest in the history of the Company—is to be paid. This increase in profits is ascribed to a larger volume of business, the actual percentage of profit in the Home Trade being lower than in the previous year. The table below shows results since 1913:—

Year ended March.	Gross Profits. £	Expenses, &c. £	Net Profits. £	Depretn. £	Dividend %
1913 ..	315,600 ..	112,000 ..	203,600 ..	41,100 ..	6
1914 ..	314,900 ..	131,500 ..	183,500 ..	23,200 ..	6
1915 ..	272,200 ..	149,500 ..	122,700 ..	41,900 ..	Nil
1916 ..	295,100 ..	125,600 ..	169,400 ..	45,100 ..	Nil
1917 ..	442,800 ..	140,200 ..	302,600 ..	44,100 ..	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
1918 ..	544,300 ..	125,200 ..	419,100 ..	45,100 ..	12 $\frac{1}{2}$

A satisfactory feature of the past year's working is the reduction in management expenses. Labor and other difficulties have made it impossible to effect the full amount of necessary repairs, but a reserve of £54,600 has been deducted from trading profits and placed to a suspense account. A sum of £100,000 is placed to reserve, as against £75,000 a year ago, and £25,000 goes to a War Contingencies Reserve. After setting aside £15,000 to Pension Fund and paying the $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. dividend, the balance carried forward is increased by £7,800.

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I cannot conclude without paying a compliment to the management and the staff on their labors for the past year. I am aware that this is a usual function at general meetings, but my expression of thanks to them on your behalf and ours is no mere matter of form. As to the manager, the City Equitable is his hobby, and he literally lives, breathes, and sleeps for nothing else; while all of our staff have been working at unusually high pressure, and have been devotedly loyal in their services to the company. The gross premium income has taken a rapid, I might say a startling, bound forward. In itself, gentlemen, that would be nothing to boast of if the assets had lagged behind, so it is pleasant to be able to record that whether measured by the volume of our reserves, the spread of business, the number of our treaties, or the offers of new ones, the strength of the company has grown in an even greater degree than the premium income. I now beg formally to move the adoption of the report and accounts, but before I submit it to the meeting possibly some of you may like to ask some questions.

Mr. PETER HAIG THOMAS: I have much pleasure in seconding the adoption of the report.

The resolution was put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

Mr. C. T. BARCLAY: I beg to move:—"That the retiring directors, Mr. H. M. Grayson, the Right Hon. Lord Ribblesdale, P.C., the Right Hon. the Earl of March, M.V.O., and Colonel Sir Douglas Dawson, G.C.V.O., C.M.G., be re-elected."

Mr. H. R. GRENSIDE seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. J. W. GREEN: I have been asked to propose the following resolution:—"That Messrs. Langton and Lepine be re-elected as auditors of the company at a fee of 300 guineas." I should like to congratulate the board on the very satisfactory balance-sheet which has been laid before the shareholders to-day.

Mr. BARRETT LENNARD seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I should like to propose the usual vote of thanks to the chairman and directors. Although it is usual I venture to say I think on this occasion it will be even heartier than ever.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bowyer, and adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I am much obliged to you for the vote of thanks, and also for the kind remarks made by one of the shareholders—Mr. Green. I only hope that when we meet again next year we may have an equally satisfactory result to submit.

Mr. ALEXANDER J. MONRO: I should like to propose a hearty vote of thanks from the shareholders to the manager and staff. We have heard of a nine days' wonder, but we have in this company a nine years' wonder. When a company starts its first year with £9,000, and in the ninth year it reaches a figure of £1,200,000, I think we have every cause for satisfaction. We have an active manager and a very energetic staff, who have evidently thrown their whole heart and soul into the business, and, as the chairman has said, our manager has made a hobby of this company. Our organization has been wonderful, both as to capital and accumulation and increase of the business. The ratio of loss is a very satisfactory one. The chairman dealt with one matter which really does require attention, and that is the very large amount of outstanding premium income. If we could get that down to half, and invest it, it would really bring in a considerable amount of interest, and I think that is a matter that is really worth looking after. With that little suggestion which you have in mind I have great pleasure in moving that a hearty vote of thanks be awarded to the manager and staff.

Mr. E. H. TOOTAL seconded the motion.

The CHAIRMAN: I have great pleasure in submitting that to the meeting. I have already expressed my thanks both on your behalf and ours to the manager and staff for the splendid services they have rendered throughout the year. I would only reply with regard to the criticism, put forward in such a friendly way, as to the outstanding premiums, that we have not lost sight of that matter. We have had it constantly before us, but you will understand that in the middle of a big war companies are understaffed, and it is not through any lack of care on their part that premiums do not come in quicker. It takes many months to collect them, but we are always jogging along, and we hope after the war that we shall be able to reduce that figure substantially in proportion to the other figures in the balance-sheet.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The GENERAL MANAGER (Mr. E. G. Mansell): On behalf of the staff and myself I thank you very much indeed. It would be impossible for the company to reach the wonderful results we have attained unless we had the energetic and able assistance of our staff, and I am pleased to say that we have this in a very high degree of excellency. I again thank you for your kind appreciation of our services.

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